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TRUTH AND FANCY.

TRUTH AND FANCY.

TRUTH AND FANCY.

"Then through a veil of dreams,
Woven by thought, truth's youthful beauty glows,
And life's redundant and rejoicing streams
Give to the soulless soul, where'er it flows."

TRUTH AND FANCY:

TALES

Legendary, Historic, and Descriptive.

BY

MARY J. WINDLE.

PHILADELPHIA:
C. SHERMAN, PRINTER.
1850.

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W OR 20 JUN 34

Preface.

THE authoress of the following stories has been induced to allow their publication in their present compact form, from consideration of the extent and duration of the favour which has been unexpectedly extended to them, when modestly peeping out amidst the brilliant contributions by which the chief monthly magazines of this country are so deservedly distinguished. The hope is entertained, that what gave pleasure in an imperfect and broken form may, in completion, not give less. Should the reader chance to find scope for enjoyment in these collected labours of many days, the writer will have had her purpose accomplished; and without regarding this present approbation as an absolute pledge of future favour, will be incited to more mature endeavours

to add to the available enjoyments of domestic leisure. Relinquishing all thoughts of a fantastic and needless brilliancy, she has applied herself to the task of imparting instruction and pleasure, ready to be satisfied if, in the main, these writings minister to human sympathies.

M. J. W.

Wilmington, Delaware, 1850.

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THE HUGUENOT.

TRUTH AND FANCY.

The Huguenot.*

CHAPTER I.

"Now through the harmonious meads
One glimmering path, or lost in forest leads,
Or up the winding hill doth labouring climb—
The single street that rural world dividing.
O'er the smooth stream the quiet rafts are gliding;
And through the lively fields, heard faintly, goes
The many sheep-bells' music—and the song
Of the lone herdsman, from its still repose
Rouses the gentle echo!—Calm along
The stream, gay hamlets crown the pastoral scene,
Or peep through distant glades, or from the hill
Hang dizzy down! Man and the soil serene
Dwell neighbour-like together—and the still
Meadow sleeps peaceful round the rural door—
And, all-familiar, wreathes and clusters o'er
The lowly casement, the green vine's embrace,
As with a loving arm, clasping the gentle place."

THERE are portions of this beautiful world that seem, through all the vicissitudes of time, to have retained their primeval loveliness; which, with their gushing streams,

* The term Huguenot was given to the French Protestants; the origin of the term has never been found out. Their religion was a simple form of worship, in which the preachers expounded the Holy Scriptures in their vernacular tongue, and assured the congregation

and hills, and plants, and forests, do verily sing for joy. How true is it that nature never ceases to respect her early handiwork! The children whom she has chanced to glorify with beauty at the first, she will never fail to tend; those once neglected, she is likely to neglect evermore. As we gaze upon her choicest scenes, we readily image to ourselves the same reposeful magnificence as when

> "The earth rested quiet,
> And poised in the air,
> And heaven's blue bosom
> Lay naked and bare."

The soul unfolds itself with a new sense of freedom, and becomes beguiled of all its earthward tendencies and cares.

It is no slight charm to the story I am about to pen, that its first chapter opens upon one of the most delightful provinces of southern France—a province exhibiting every variety of picturesque scenery,—from wavelike undulations of land, and streamlets that look like veins of silver as

that their worship, to be accepted, must proceed from the heart. A congregation of these people was privately established at Meaux, in one of the southern provinces of France, in the year 1513, and their doctrines made so much progress that the lordly proprietor of that district, a violent and sanguinary man, became alarmed, and made such representations before the Parliament of Paris, that an edict against the heretics was published in 1520. It was then decreed that they should be exterminated as rebels, and their goods confiscated. Most of them fled to Switzerland, taking refuge in the mountainous districts of Piedmont, where, in the shadows of the lonely hills, they could serve God in secret. There for the space of three hundred years we shall find them continuing to carry on the unbroken line of Protestantism in France.—*Browning's History of the Huguenots.*

they run, to fantastic promontories capped by knolls of shady trees, and, where not lashed by waterfalls, bound in by flowers and mosses. To behold this rare paradise, the sun, moon, and stars look through a low, warm, mellow sky, the want of clearness in which is atoned for by the many lustrous tints that trace themselves continually upon its surface. And if to the chastened radiance of its days, and the undisturbed tranquillity of its nights, the province of Dauphiné be presumed to possess the charms of a smiling season, the reader most probably knows sufficient to induce the wish one day to wander thither. Nay, shall we not together realize the fulness of its beauty, even as in a dream; and, forgetful of present time and surrounding circumstances, enter one of those deep winding valleys for which Dauphiné is so remarkable. The entrance to that we now select may be poetically compared to the passage leading to the famous grotto of Antiparos. It is not, you perceive, such a vale as the ridges of two opposing mountains usually form; the irregularity of its course, together with its narrowness and ruggedness, are suggestive of a former convulsion. To gather up the materials for a geological lecture is, however, not our purpose; neither do we intend to encourage one abstracted thought.

The charms of solitude are various—press we on; we will have to take good care of our footing, for the pathway is narrow, and, as poets say, *choked*. We are treading the topmost branches of trees that trend down till they meet the foaming stream that has its course below, and there they bend over to touch, as if to do a human kindness, the lowest of the opposite ascending ranks. Above

ds, what a scene! The branches of bygone centuries still giving out their sheltering leaves, still becoming animated when the air is set in motion. Those patches of blue sky, how sweet they seem! Listen to us, ye fairy elves! that wander up and down these woodland aisles, catching the blossoms as they fall, or waiting patiently for the seeds that fall, and that must be buried. Listen to us! we also are Arcadians. We have chosen the silence of your place for leagues of plains covered with spire-crowned villages and joyous vintages; and share in your thrill of exultation. O that we too could live in these airy halls!

The scene scarce changes as we advance—if not the same trees, the same verdure, and chinks, and rivulets, and flowery vegetation, all seeming like a cleft in the heart of the great world. And now we come upon a ruined cottage, and another, and another; and as we journey on, lo! midway from the foliage below, rises the ivy-covered tower of a buried church.

Ah, now there seems a stillness in the valley, another meaning in its bounding shadows. The sound of the stream beneath, in its rocky bed, is like a voice of wail, and the moan of the giant trees is only expressive of unutterable agony. Let us rest awhile beneath yon ruined porch—the prey of that slow and decrepit workman whom men call time. We will there too recite the story that hangs over this deserted spot. It relates to a time when conscience had no permitted liberty; when a government, generous in all things else, would not, by the exertion of any influence, incline itself to the amendment of the stern decree requiring all the inhabitants of *France* to be of the

same religious creed, or, at least, so well to comply in practice with its forms, as not to be distinguishable from the true worshippers. Any departure from the general faith was, at this period, visited with the severest penalty that could lie between bodily chastisement with the confiscation of goods, and the high penalty of death. Indeed, those who would not bow to its requisitions were deemed the worst of traitors, sworn enemies to political unity.

Divine Truth, who is never far from man, however oppressed and however blinded, and who ever discovers herself to those who truly and earnestly seek her, turned her neglected footsteps towards the homes of these pure-hearted cottagers, to teach them that the time had come when the Father would be worshipped, neither with vain oblations nor splendid ceremonials, but in spirit and in truth.

In one home after another, by some quickening, invisible influence, the blessed word was taken in; and presently, around a new-formed centre, they united themselves in sacred fellowship to this religion, so pure and separate from whatever man himself might plead.

A few rods hence we discern the frame of a cottage clasped by luxuriant foliage, and beautified with flowers, like some hallowed relic. This was the house of their minister—he who, with them, had studied in simplicity of spirit the holy word, and with them had taken up his lot. That cottage was the place where, for a time, the villagers safely met together, to take sweet counsel in each other's company, and seek the blessing of Heaven on their homes and hearts. The summer that witnessed this eventful

change, passed noiselessly and happily away. Autumn came, and the harvests of the steeps and on the plains above were more luscious and abundant than they had ever been before. And still, as each morning flung its light along the vale, they bent their steps towards the place of prayer and rest, anxious to enjoy the pure communion of a perfect faith. This revival of religious hope affected none more than the aged pastor; his faculties, that had been becoming gradually dimmed, now appeared to receive a fresh and permanent invigoration—a new gladness lighted up his countenance, and an inexpressible tenderness—such as might have distinguished the Saviour of men, the chief Shepherd of the sheep—irradiated his eyes. Sitting at the casement of that lowly cot, so picturesquely perched beneath the shelter of a high, rocky cliff, he would watch, with a fatherly interest, the villagers as they came up the ascent, one by one, children, and maidens, and vigorous manhood. Between him and the members of his flock there reigned that happy confidence which disposes to a mutual interest and love. That aged pastor had long been held as one with them; his voice was their guidance, his approval their best reward. His position and character, however, were by no means extraordinary. There were many such pastors then in France—men who, if, like Fenelon, under the influence of customs which tradition had sanctified, and unsuspicious of the spell which bound them, laboured with a zeal, a simplicity and sense of duty not unworthy of the apostolic age; seeking as they did to draw, though by many hindrances, those who as yet had not been numbered in the Christian fold. All memory of

these may have disappeared; yet this is no cause for withholding from them this passing tribute to their piety and zeal; from acknowledging that the

——"Labours of the just
Smell sweet and blossom in the dust."

As the valley was being bereft of its last varied verdure, and the stream below became lessened and more confined, the villagers felt creeping over them a saddening spirit, premonitory of more than autumnal decay, or of wintry quietness. It was the sadness which comes over those who are leaving the solitudes of their youth; such a sadness as when the heart-strings are

"Left low trailing,"

and can clasp nothing earthly for a sure dependance. To the calm serenity of countenance that distinguished them as they gathered in their pastor's home, was added an anxious and grave expression, indicative of some exterior apprehension. It was not to be supposed that their withdrawal from the communion of a church that claimed for itself universal dominion, and *knew* not even the name, or suspected the possibility of exercising religious toleration with any advantage to itself, would calmly view its solemn rites and splendid ceremonials thus supplanted. The very rusticity of the Huguenots—for so they were called—was one of the strongest arguments for their immediate exposure, and, if need were, their condign punishment. It could not be brooked that men without any learning, without any pretension to conversance with ecclesiastical his-

tory, should thus impeach the past traditions and present witness of a church that, together with its gorgeous and priestly hierarchy, with emperors as its subjects, and nations as its communicants, could point to the gorgeous cathedral of the middle ages, in testimony of that devotion in which tens of thousands, now in their graves, had esteemed its worship.

Tidings of the heretical disposition of the inhabitants of the valley were not long in travelling over the distance of half a league, and inciting the inquiry of the curé who presided over the parish of Beauvais. The individual who conveyed these tidings was none other than Richelieu, the old sexton of that older church, and who, finding his occupation quite gone, had, for several months, experienced considerable uneasiness. This man was a strange compound of innocence and superstition; kind-hearted in disposition, but wilful in his prejudices; though observant of all that was transpiring in the valley, he had endeavoured as long as he could to keep silent. Sabbath after Sabbath he rang out the brazen chimes in the tower; carefully as ever was the high altar set, and the whole material paraphernalia dusted: it was not his fault truly that none came in.

The change of sentiment had been as general as it was thorough, and the old sexton, too deaf to hear, and too dull to comprehend the meaning of the change, would walk up and down the aisles of the sacred edifice, muttering to himself, and taking care to look as gloomy as possible. He it was, who, wearied of this state of things, and perhaps alarmed at the thought of suspicion attaching to himself

as being concerned in the dismemberment, thought it high time to give notice to the reverend curé, who had oversight of the adjoining parish. It was one bright morning that he set out on the unwelcome mission; his way led over a district of country almost uninhabited—a vast manorial possession of the house of D'Angouleine. The sexton would immediately have proceeded to the mansion—a high and irregular Gothic building, that rose in gloom and beauty from a deep and narrow strip of woodland—but that he preferred consulting the temperate judgment of a clerical adviser, to that of a man whose passions were capable of being infuriated, on occasions when his own interest, reputation, and honour were concerned, even to madness. On and on, therefore, he went, feeling himself to be the messenger of evil tidings, and sadly grieving that there was no one else on whom to lay the burden.

At this period, when a knowledge of letters was confined to few, and a king's post was almost the only kind of post known, the most complete isolation was wont to characterize even neighbouring villages; through want of a sufficient intercommunication, interests the most diverse would grow up side by side, creating sometimes a complacent pride, more often a mutual jealousy and permanent ill-will.

Almost instinctively finding out the parsonage, the sexton opened its little wicker-gate, and, walking up its gravelled pathway, espied the curé sitting with a Latin tome upon his knee, in a bower of myrtle trees. The tramp of a pair of wooden-soled shoes, that hung heavily at the feet of the worthy sexton, immediately drew the

attention of the curé, who, rising up, welcomed the old man in with a sort of familiar glance.

"And what may be the matter, Richelieu?" said the curé.

"Little, little," answered the old sexton, willing to smooth the way to a full and absolute confession; "but times in the valley are not as they have been—a curse seems to hang over it. The bell tolls, but, after it ceases to sound, all again is very silent—very silent! I can scarce tell what may be the matter; but ban there is; and though every secular day is as heretofore, the Sabbath and holydays are quite neglected." The sexton uttered these words with unusual energy, and his eyes wore the appearance of great earnestness.

"You do not take me by surprise," remarked the curé; "I have had already some inklings of the matter, and even a request has been made to the higher ecclesiastical authorities to institute an inquiry into the subject. I had not supposed, however, that more than a few had become affected by the new doctrines. Heresy is a contagious disease, however. Well, our purpose for the present is to keep quiet, to give no warning of the intended movement. You have done your duty, and may now return."

The old man, to tell the truth, was very much surprised at these words, and would gladly have entered into some explanation, some extenuating circumstance which might, in some measure, shield the villagers; but observing in the curé a dislike to the entire subject, and an evident unwillingness further to recur to it, he hobbled back as he had come to his old governmental post, valued at the good and

satisfactory, though very small sum of three hundred francs a year. Ah! how the deceitfulness of riches, or even of a sure competency, will at times choke the word. The church and state that gave to the worthy sexton food to eat and raiment to put on, must needs be very good; it never entered his heart even to question this, and those who did so question it had his most sincere commiseration.

Whether the secret intelligence that the old man brought back with him was not in its turn anticipated, is not certain. His own peering eyes observed on the morrow the most unmistakeable sign of alarm, and, with all his loyal feelings excited, he more than suspected the concertment of general measures of resistance. But it was none of his business to observe this; his yesterday's journey would free him from all harm, and others might manage the State Commissioners as they were best able.

CHAPTER II.

"Here is peace, said I,
In man's abode, in earth, in air, and sky;
But the heart shrinketh from his death-like rest.
* * * * *
Something stirred."

WORDSWORTH.

THE unusual stillness of the succeeding morning was that which, as we have noted, first startled the sexton. Looking up along the steeps, he saw no being astir; the sun rose high, but the ripe grapes still hung on the vines, and the song of the birds was free and shrill. We have told how quickly and for what reason the good sexton composed himself; had he taken any trouble, or, indeed, had he risen any earlier, he might have traced the families, for whose spiritual welfare he had so lately concerned himself, to the house of their minister, to that same large and shadowy room, which, adorned with rustic simplicity, seemed the fit studio for one who had devoted himself to the service of Heaven. Here were they gathered together; the Bible lay closed; and earnest consultation was being held as to the measures of safety requisite to be taken in the emergency their proceedings had brought about. Many difficulties had to be considered, many objections overcome. Clouds and darkness emphatically lay round about them, and there was evident need of consummate judgment as well as of the exercise of firm and determined bravery.

The Huguenotic mothers watched earnestly the countenances of their husbands, now engaged in strong debate, reading thus all they had to hope, and all to fear. A mighty stake was already ventured. In accepting the faith once delivered to the saints, the Huguenots had accepted all its perils. Whilst thus conferring, a tap was heard at the door. Instant stillness ensued. The tap was steadily repeated at proper intervals of time, and all doubt being removed, the door was opened. There entered a rustic peasant girl, whose beautifully defined features, clear blue eyes, and sweet expression, were calculated to inspire an immeasurable love. She was the daughter of one of the poorest of the villagers, but by her goodness had so won the confidence of the aged pastor that he feared not to commit to her many missions of importance, as well as many visits of consolation, which his duties or his infirmities prevented him from making. She had been received at the château as the especial companion of the Duke D'Angouleine's two accomplished daughters. She had imparted to them a portion of her guileless spirit and native grace; they had given to her that refinement which, added to nature's charms, is ever so engaging. So remote indeed was that feudal habitation from any great city, and so complete its loneliness, that to one far less amiable than this young peasant girl, its doors might have gladly been opened. The education of Annie—that was the name she went by—had been conducted under the immediate supervision of the pastor, a circumstance which had placed her far in advance of many gifted with superior advantages, talents, and ambition. Her charms were of that spiritual order which the-

cultivated mind and well-directed heart only can properly appreciate. If not made for seclusion, she nevertheless rejoiced in pursuing unobtrusively her way; neither looking to the right hand nor to the left, so that she might do good while each day lasted, and commend herself tranquilly to God, as she lay down to each night's brief, transitory rest. The expression of her face had a pure and almost seraphic sweetness, such as we are accustomed to see in likenesses of the Madonna. The dimpling play of her young and lovely features was sometimes lighted up with a sweet surprise, though seldom sparkling with the keenness of unrestrained joy. The childlike, yet not undignified, grace of her form, was moreover in perfect keeping with the beauty of her countenance.

No sooner had Annie entered the crowded room than she glided to the table and received from the pastor a small note with the whispered request to deliver it to her friend at the château. She took the note, gently kissed the extended hand, and without word or visible sign to any one present, immediately retired. The conference thus slightly interrupted was now continued with renewed earnestness. Immediate action of whatever kind had been resolved on; and though the various propositions suggested were indicative of various degrees of judgment, each proposition proved conclusively the good faith of its author, and a readiness to make any sacrifice required for the adoption of the one which should be finally approved.

The civil court of France being at this time bound up with the ecclesiastical, it was necessary to anticipate the movement of political policy on this matter, as well as the

sure stroke that would reach them on being excommunicated from the church. From neither could they hope for any favour, and from neither was there any appeal. No conditions of peace would be allowed, except that of the unconditional surrender of private judgment to arbitrary canons. They were thus compelled by every necessity to decide without delay.

Any painter anxious to exhibit the Huguenots in their spirit and in their faith at that moment of time when their condition had assumed the highest point of interest, might by the transcript of those thus gathered in the pastor's room, have realized his object. Old and young—those whose many wrinkles told of the heavy burden of their day, and those whom life had not yet shaded with sorrow or care—children and maidens, were together here, but the thrill that went through all when the final verdict was given must ever lie beyond the range of human pen. Even the babe on its mother's bosom seemed to share the emotion it occasioned, and every face became pallid with natural grief. Too weak to resist the force that would be opposed to them, there appeared only one mode of deliverance, that of instantaneous flight.

"Perchance," exclaimed the old man, their pastor, whilst every eye shone with tears and the bravest hearts beat against their prison walls,—"Perchance, after a few years of exile, a kind Providence may permit us to return. Only with the present have we to do. The advice given to the dwellers in Judea is now given to us—'Flee ye to the mountains.'"

"There nature will be on our side," interrupted an old

peasant who sat near; "the fastnesses of the Alps will hold out against all the battalions of France."

Inspired by this sudden appeal to the most animated of all natural feelings, and this outspoken dependence on a powerful ally, the whole assembly commenced chanting the hymn:

Though drearily, and wearily, and mournfully, and slow,
Towards a far off spot our exiled footsteps go;
Across that track of dismal length our hearts shall never roam,
But still evade oppression's strength, and lingering dwell at home.
Yes! nobly free our hearts shall be, nor share the outward chain,
The soul preserves its liberty, though crushed and bowed with pain.
We trust the future, yet unknown, with calm, courageous breast,
For righteous Heaven still makes His own the cause of the oppressed.

CHAPTER III.

"And not a word by her was spoken;
For many a listener's ear was by,
But surely was the silence broken,
For eye could well interpret eye."

THE old château of Dauphiné had just been burnished by the morning sun that gilded it with a glory that must surely in the olden time have delighted its first inhabiters (and even now, as the new glory plated the battlements, and was flung back from the shining casements, it served to grace its deep retired and solitary majesty), when Annie Lorraine rose from her little cot and glided noiselessly to the apartment of Alicia D'Angouleine, the youngest daughter of the Duke D'Angouleine. In her trembling fingers, white as the lily, was the note she had undertaken to deliver, but which she had deferred from the previous night to a more convenient season. That moment had arrived; and now her hand was laid upon the door, and she passed gently in. Had Alicia been awake, she might have deemed herself visited by some bright angel. The curtain of the narrow Gothic window flung its crimson beams upon her, and as she moved towards the bed, encompassed her with a rosy halo.

"Alicia, wake! I have a message for thee. It is in this note. Let me draw back the curtains that you may read it."

Alicia was in the light slumber such as a gentle and

loved voice is sure to waken. She looked trustfully up and faintly smiled. Annie, bending low, kissed the red lips of the late beautiful sleeper, who forthwith raised herself, took the note, and opened out its unsealed folds.

Annie turned her head aside and waited patiently for a word from her companion, whose delicate sensibility had imparted to a most gentle character an unreservedness as charming as it was sincere.

"Alas! alas!" was her broken exclamation, as she sank back on the cushioned pillows, the lightness and ampleness of which afforded some resistance. "My dear home to be left! my name to be forgotten! Can it—must it be thus? O what would support us in these trials, if we might not flee to our blessed Saviour?"

Annie could not be a witness to her friend's grief, and left the room. Alicia rose, and dressed, and opened the eastern window to which the warm waves of morning air were flowing. She there paused a moment; and as though suddenly strengthened and calmed by the intervention of some holy thought, she exclaimed, in a tone full of quietness and peace, as she looked towards the burning beams that played amidst the tendrils of the vine that encased the window,—"Beautiful day! your light is to me like the smile of Heaven. How I would love to play amidst your brightness, so peaceful and serene. May God give me a willing heart to obey his summons."

As Alicia extended her gaze to the wide landscape, now exhibiting a thousand pastoral beauties, she felt a sensation of pleasure thrill through her frame for which she could hardly account. It was the aid given by Heaven in

that trying hour, preventing her from realizing that soon the beautiful scene would be no more than a loved memory —that the place that now knew her should know her no more for ever. To a young heart like her own, the full grief of banishment was almost incomprehensible. Unlike those who at the first shock of adversity, know all, feel all, she was one who from the yearnings of her own spirit, would ever seek to gather up, day by day, new tokens of love from those around her. Even now, while home was not yet left, the heavenly promises that could sustain her must have been very near—her guardian and invisible angel doubtless sheltering her with his bright pinions. This much she was conscious of, that there was less suffering involved in an immediate departure with the Huguenots, than in lingering behind under the searching evidence of bereft affection. She could not bear to hear the voices that had breathed so kindly speak in harsh and unforgiving tones—the tones which follow on the wrong that time takes not away. Her thoughts magnified her present fears, while her hopes—those swiftest of all messengers, and whose purpose is to fulfil the heart's behests—brought within a very short compass the period of her exile. Yes, she would return on a happier day. Perhaps when her present attachment to the Huguenotic faith should be praised, or even, if still held to have erred, she might be forgiven. Like a Peri on the verge of Paradise, she thought she heard pronounced the certainty of a quick return. Ah! most lovely girl, beyond thy father's home the world is unwinsome and its glances are cold. No trees are like those thou viewest—no sportful shadows half

so beautiful. There is more in the small compass of thy present chamber than the eye can see; attachments of which thou scarce dreamest to exist will break, and oh, how hardly will they be broken!

The meditations of Alicia were interrupted by the approach of her sister Blanche, who bade her in a voice of more than usual joyousness descend into the breakfast-room. Alicia instantly turned, and impressing a sweet kiss on her sister's proffered lips, did as she was bidden. When about crossing the great hall, the two sisters encountered Annie, whom they mutually greeted. The Duke had preceded them, and at the time of their entrance was looking out on the large lawn and wood of oaks spreading far into the distance. To the beauty of such a scene facing the château, was added the capacity for its enjoyment. In the possession of a highly cultured taste, the family of the Duke, with himself, were more than ordinarily privileged. It was this that made that remote abode so delightful, and amply compensated for many of those luxuries and comforts which were pouring at this period into France from the transalpine regions. This increase of refinement had the effect of spurring those who most prided themselves in the manly vigour of a bygone age, to renew its wild and lusty sports; and many were the wild hunts which the nobility, banding together according to the respective provinces in which their domains were situated, would enter on, and this with a zeal as warm as when the necessity of warding off danger compelled men to leave their quiet homes, and engage in the arduous chase. Except on such occasions — occasions of infinite pleasure, and always

abounding with merriment—the château to any passing stranger would have appeared melancholy and lonely. The valley of the Huguenots was completely out of sight, and over the wide landscape, to the very verge of the horizon, there appeared nothing to break the stillness, except the flutter of the eagle in its swoop, the bleating of flocks, or the falls of the winding stream,—a landscape, that with its golden and sombre hues, its sweet variety of aspect, might gladly have employed the genius of Poussin in his later years; for it had ruins too and ivied towers, the remnants of military structures and bridges, over which occasionally some solitary wayfarer only, or a party of gay cavaliers, or some country team laden with country produce, or some officious bearer of despatches would occasionally pass.

Blanche immediately on entering the breakfast-room, half buried herself in the velvet cushions of an antique chair, and in it lay at rest with her eyes closed, as though absorbed in some bright dream. The Duke leaned on the high Gothic window-sill, looking on the prospect with an absent but serious air.

As soon as Alicia had paid her respects to her father, she glided out of the room to converse with Annie. She had scarcely disappeared, when the Duke, turning to Blanche, said abruptly,—

"What change is this that has come over your sister lately?"

"I know not, papa," was the disturbed reply of Blanche to a question, the solution of which was equally interesting to herself. "I have noticed of late in Alicia many

strange deviations from her accustomed habits. Tell me, has it not occurred to you, papa, that her relaxed interest in her daily duties, together with her repeated visits to the valley, originate in a cause not purely accidental? For myself, my suspicions are attracted towards Annie, who, though she never refers to the subject, is, I am persuaded, imbued with Huguenotic fancies; I fear, that she is endeavouring to shake the faith of Alicia,—to weaken her confidence in the established church. If so, she should have no further opportunity of impressing her heretical principles on the unsuspecting mind of my lovely sister."

The Duke had no opportunity of immediate reply, for the door at that moment opened, and Alicia together with Annie entered. A glance of pride lighted up the father's features as his eyes rested on his beautiful child. Of the daughters of France there might be some of more pretensions, but none of more serene and perfect beauty than existed in the form and countenance of Alicia. So delicate was the order of her loveliness, so pure and soft her complexion, that her appearance gave almost certain token of fragile health. Her eyes, which were of a deep blue, had a thoughtful and serene expression, while her forehead was of the finest Grecian form. The tone of her mind resembled her features; it was a mind well balanced, thoughtful, and elevated. As one could not look upon the loveliness of her face and turn away without regret, so those able to appreciate her beauty of intellect could not withdraw from its clear and rich fountains without feeling a desire to linger there perpetually, and enjoy their freshness. And what gave an additional charm to Alicia, was the delight she had in

applying her superiority of mind to the improvement of those with whom she had partially connected herself; in their faith wholly. She lived but to do good; and religion in directing all her acts to works of benevolence had added to her native charms, charms more ennobling.

Alicia quickly perceived by the sudden silence her entrance had occasioned, and the changed looks of Blanche, that she had been the subject of conversation. Guided by intuitive discretion, she gently approached her father, and placing a hand upon his arm, she fondly kissed his brow. Her look of affection subdued at once the severity of his feelings, for he instantly checked himself in what, if not thus interrupted, might have terminated in a stern reproof, and caressed her with more than ordinary affection.

Alicia smiled, but O how sadly! Soon the last kiss would be given; soon the loved form of her father would fade away—fade away as the dead fade, unheard and unseen.

This was the day on which the Duke anticipated the arrival of his son from Paris, together with a few friends, the proprietors of not far distant estates. The Chamber of Peers, to which by imperial prerogative, his son had been appointed—contrary to usual custom if not to former precedents, had just closed a most important and exciting session. Unfurnished as the Duke was with any daily journal or monthly bulletin of parliamentary proceedings—the gift of later times—he had no choice but to wait patiently for his son's return in order to gather information on those points of decision which more or less were likely to affect

his interests. It is unnecessary to state here the cause of his own absence from the capital.

The sun, though high in heaven, had not yet had time to consume the dew of night, when the Duke D'Angouleine, with Blanche and Alicia, who, with himself, were gaily mounted, he on a fleet and fiery courser, they on discreet and nimble palfreys, issued by the eastern gate of the château. After entering the basin of verdure that lay below, girded by continuous ranges of wide-set trees, they pursued the direction in which the visiters would certainly be met. Early as they were, they were yet too late not to meet many a woodman at his solitary work, stripping branches bare, or making the earth to ring with strong and sturdy blows.

"They come! they come!" was the joyful expression of Blanche, as she detected, by her nice sense of sound, the approach of steeds. Our party immediately increased their pace, and in a few moments, through the opening of the trees, other forms were visible. It was evident that both parties were now putting their steeds' mettle to the test. The long expected ones were approaching. They were meeting, and they met.

The son of the Duke, with his fine athletic form and manly bearing, was the exact prototype, in these respects, of his father. Yet it was easy for the most casual glance to discover, that the features of the son were less prominent and less severe. It was plain, too, that care, either of family interests, or of the nation, had had little power to gloom the heyday of a still joyous youth. As with dexterous skill

he obtained, without dismounting, and while almost in full gallop, the salute of a kiss from each of the fair sisters, his cheeks glowed with pride, and his elegant form, as he righted in the saddle, could not but excite admiration.

Whilst one of Victor's companions, after making a profound obeisance, closed in with the Duke, the other seemed disposed to renew the feat we have recorded of the brother, and in a trice his lips pressed those of Alicia, who, in the excitement of the meeting, had not yet found words to speak. It was the Count Louis. But there is a fulness of joy above the expression of words. The looks of Alicia told all; and her lover, reining up by her side, breathed fonder words than may here be written. Incessantly the gay voice of Blanche was heard from where she was rallying her brother on some deficiency of promise, or trying the strength of his memory or the exactness of his knowledge on some affair in which she seemed more than slightly interested. But the two lovers, Alicia and the Count, heeded neither voice nor sound; absorbed in their own joyous conversings, which, so far from being stayed by further emotion, seemed now to flow in a deeper and more tranquil channel.

At a signal from the Duke, the journey so near completion, was continued: but there was no more haste. Gently they went on, as those who had no more to seek; nor as they passed beneath the shadows of the château did any sombre thought appear to come upon them. A few embrowned peasants, who, at a short distance from the party, were gathered up to see the glad array, after many expressions of joy, spoke to each other of the brilliant con-

trast of colour afforded by the rich dresses of the strangers against the dark, shaded walls of the château.

Strange is it, that in every country excepting France, Spain, and Italy, the magic of colour should almost be unobserved; that whilst the humblest peasant of the Provençal provinces can find a pleasure in light and shade, in the hues of heaven and the hues of earth, we ask for more, even for special artistic applications, before we will put on a smile; refusing in this, though in nothing else, to be guided by the senses.

The entrance of the company into the château, was by no means the signal for that intense activity which so many writers have delighted to describe as accompanying every movement of their heroes and their heroines, thus throwing around their subject an interest completely adventitious. Preparations for the reception of the guests had been made on a large scale, and their entrance was so far from discomposing the establishment, as to seem but as the fitting complement to the entertainment it afforded.

Breakfast again was spread, and the ease and grace with which Blanche and Alicia waited on the noble guests, was certainly calculated to impress them with the goodness of heart that dictated each slight attention, and the beauty which adorned and enhanced its value. It was plain to see that the visiters promised themselves unlimited pleasure: indeed, before they rose from table, plans were formed both for the present and for ensuing days. Blanche, apparently, had the most inventive, perhaps we should say directive, genius. She it was who undertook to allot the

task of each successive hour; and truly, if all she promised, and she promised nothing that was not completely practicable, was to be fulfilled, the guests might well be pardoned for evincing their delight. The inhabitants of France have always been distinguished by the warmth of their imagination: this it is which clothes for them with more than an earthly light every object on which they set their hearts. These emotions may be evanescent, but are not, on this account, so long as they last, less real.

"Well, Victor," said the Duke, breaking into some gay conversation that his son was holding with Blanche; "what of the Bill* in relation to these villagers, and those affected by the like heretical complaint? I had meant that my first question should have referred to it; for certainly our interest in it is not to be slighted."

"The Bill, as originally formed," replied Victor, "received much opposition. I verily believe that the temperaments of men change so soon as they get within the walls of Paris. All there is so gay, so mild and bland, that kind, nay weak, impulses are certain to pervert the goodliest judgment. Is it not so, Louis?"

* The following were the principal features of this Bill:

It prohibited Huguenotic worship under severe penalties.

It ordered all Huguenotic ministers to quit the kingdom within fifteen days, and to abstain from preaching, under pain of condemnation to the galleys.

It forbid schools for the instruction of their children.

They might continue their trade and enjoy their property, on condition only of abstaining from worship.

Browning's History of the Huguenots.

Sir Louis bowed to the question after a parliamentary fashion, but could pay no further attention to the inquiry; for Alicia, the lovely being who had filled his mind during the last seven months, whose letters, the reflexes of her own pure thoughts, had filled up every vacuity,—she was still engaging him; and, in the myriad of questions he obliged her to answer, she seemed to speak a thousand times more enchantingly.

The Duke still waited for the desired information. "The Bill to which you refer," continued Victor, "in its first form could not gain even so much as a lengthy debate. The premises on which its framers had relied, the body of the Assembly would not assent to. It was affirmed in opposition, that though the Huguenots were arch traitors, they were few in number, and, therefore, not to be dreaded, provided precautionary measures were taken to prevent the increase, or to cause a wide-spread knowledge of their vile tenets. I could not repress my chagrin at this phase of opinion. It exhibited a coolness quite incompatible with true Catholic devotion. And so amendment after amendment was adopted, till nothing was gained but the expulsion of these people from our country, and the confiscation of their property. I wish we might apply to them Nebuchadnezzar's test of a fiery furnace," continued the son, in a manner, the reverentialness of which was strangely in contrast with the uttered thought.

"It is well," replied the Duke, "though, indeed, in expelling the inhabitants of the adjoining valley, we make a somewhat heavy sacrifice. We shall never get such excel-

lent labourers. The peasants, elsewhere, are too generally lax in morals and dissolute in manners; and such kind, in the absence of the Huguenots, we are like to get. It is we, I say, who make the sacrifice. Had extreme and active punishment been summarily inflicted, the most would have recanted, and we should have kept them all. But it is not so. Their hearts, maddened by this forced desertion from their native homes, will only rebel still more against the religion they desert; and the tears they shed they will deem as offerings at the shrine of martyrdom. Let them go, however, where they *will*, and die out."

"But they may not go where they will," replied the son, "and I am very sure that they will never die out. There must be some earth-born principle of nature that aids them, vain-glory, obstinacy, or combativeness; for the uniformity of their agreement on all points, despite their years and sinister purposes, is such as to appear, at least, remarkable."

"I trust you took care, Victor," said the Duke, "to convey to the members of government a strong impression of the light in which we view them. There is something ominous in having heretics so near. They may well be suspected of tainting the air for miles around."

"I have done this; I have cleared our house," continued Victor, "from the shadow of suspicion of having, in any form, aided or encouraged this defection; and yet, and yet," he continued, "there may be one who is not altogether guiltless."

Victor cast a deep and searching, and, though he had

not intended it, a somewhat angry look at Alicia; who, while catching up a word here and there to know the current of her lover's thoughts, had been intently listening to the dialogue which we have traced.

"I am much mistaken," rejoined the Duke, "if his Majesty, in endeavouring by this extraordinary clemency to avoid one evil, does not bring on his kingdom a greater one. I have noted, and noted closely, the effect of leniency on the public will. The public are restive, and, as the good Bishop of Rouen would say, must be held in with bit and bridle."

This remark may serve to show the characteristic features of that lordly mind. The Duke had been brought up to understand the tenets of the Church in their most stringent application; and was, in spirit, literally the most rigid and intolerant of men. It is hard to say whether ancestral veneration had or had not any influence in deepening his religious impressions; certain it is that he had his forefathers in constant remembrance, and, in occasional allusions, was ever most wont to boast of their religious achievements, whether in the Holy Land, or on the soil of France itself.

"Good care I took, as I have said," replied Victor, in a careless and satisfied air, "that the king and his ministers should not remove from us one iota of confidence. In fact, I think I may say, that we have rather gained than lost, so far as the effect of the recent discussion on their minds is concerned."

"What part did you take?" said the Duke.

"That of a listener, and nothing more. Looks are more than words;—sometimes they tell more than votes; as it was, I saw from the first which way the wind blew, and thought it prudent to go with it. There was in truth no choice. To have urged further any rigorous penalties, would have been to excite the more sympathy for the heretics on the part of the members of the Assembly.

"Don't be too vituperative," added the Duke, who, with a temperament not much cooler, had the advantage of experience, and whose assertions, whether given in the Chamber of Peers, or in the quietude of a rural and unostentatious life, were always grave.

Victor ceased speaking, but plainly evidenced some spleen yet unexhausted, and cast what appeared reproachful glances towards his youngest sister.

"Why are you gazing on me so intently?" said Alicia.

Victor made no answer, but turned away his face, now clouded by a bitter frown.

The mild, entreatful inquiry, and this sullen look of response, struck the attention even of her lover; and a silence which none seemed to like, but which all helped to continue, took the place of the former animated conversation.

The sun was now flinging his warm and golden splendour on the green carpet of verdure, over which moved the shadows of rustling boughs. Alicia rose, and quickly advancing to the eastern window, threw it open, and waving her hand to the Count, stepped without. Her lover was not long in obeying what he chose to take

for granted was an invitation to follow. On stepping without on the wooden balcony, that ran along almost on a level with the summit of the slope, he saw Alicia at one extremity, bending over the rail, and seeming to wish to hide the emotion which her brother's sudden look might be suppposed to have excited. As with the sensitive plant, the least hurt was sure to injure her. But it was not the look that most affected her, the meaning look that told how well he had been informed, while in Paris, of her religious predilections, and how ready he was to resent the indignity which he thus imagined to be given to himself, and the proud house of which he was a scion. It was that this little circumstance was the first completely to summon her to a sense of her actual position;—of the penalty of disfavour she had incurred—the certain disaffection of a fond brother, who from childhood had humoured her in all her moods, and who in every possible way had sought to exhibit his regard.

Victor, on the other hand, was of too generous a nature long to harbour resentment, however just might be its occasion. He was as forgiving as he was impulsive; traits of character continually found together, the one vainly seeking to undo what the other recklessly, and yet with a thought of after repentance, accomplishes. Spurred by a generous impulse, he followed his sister, who was descending the slope in company with her lover, and having plucked from the ground, with a readiness and propriety that might have done honour to an eastern imagination, the flower whose symbolic language is that of reconcilement, he

handed it to her with a kind look, and without waiting for a reply, disappeared, perfectly satisfied with this effort at compensation, and half blaming himself, that he had credited so fully the statement of Blanche, as to his sister's defection from the established Church, convinced as he was, that she had neither strength of disposition, nor force of mind, to resist the main arguments for the Catholic faith, when once these were properly adduced; and satisfied, also, that even if she was rebellious, a gentle and urgent admonition would be sufficient, if not to subdue her actual sentiments, at least to restrain their expression.

CHAPTER IV.

"Thoughts by the soul conceived in silent joy,
Sounds often uttered by the timid voice—
Till we at last are pleased or self-deceived!"

ALICIA and her lover exchanged not a word until they reached the foot of the slope. Here a deep, clear, running stream compelled them to pause. This stream, edged by light and graceful willows, that enclosed between themselves a narrow path, along which the lovers glided, almost completely hid them from the sight of parties in the château; certainly there was no danger of having their mutual revealings overheard.

The Count, whom much travel had liberalized, to the extent of allowing every one, without let or hindrance, to exercise private judgment, especially in a matter so wholly personal as is religion, was yet too politic not to perceive the effect which any identification with the Huguenotic faith would exert on his political prospects. While adding a request to his former protestations, and when about, in the glowing language he could so well command, to depict the happiness to which together they might arrive, the two had come to a station of ground that overlooked the beautiful valley, commanding it from a site that afforded every advantage to light and shade, along the whole line of perspective.

The Count, who had retained but uncertain recollections of this lovely scene, and that at a time when all its rich

foliage was but just peeping out, could not restrain expressions of delight. "Let the stream wander where it will," he said, "we will go no further."

Alicia, glad of the half-expected correspondence of feeling, now thought that she herself had never beheld the valley look so beautiful. In the moment when the Count seemed so absorbed with the scene as almost to have forgotten his companion, Alicia chose to request of him obedience to a request she had to present.

"What is it, dearest?" said the Count.

"I know the strength of your love," rejoined Alicia, "and would first exact a promise of compliance, except for the peculiar character of the request, and that I would not wish to take the undue advantage which your confidence might allow; but be sure, it is a request I dearly wish to have answered."

"What is it?" again repeated her lover; and as he spoke he looked eagerly into the serene eyes of his companion.

"It is almost too much to ask," said Alicia, in a tone of deep emotion, "nevertheless, it is in your power to grant it."

This was a spur to the Count's impatience, who, no longer able to restrain curiosity, became himself the entreater. For a time Alicia resisted all attempts to reveal the wished-for boon. It was not that she sought to tamper with the expectation she had excited; it was from the influence of another and far different feeling.

"You see," she at length said, "those rustic cottages peeping out of the shrubbery along the sides of the valley.

See how diligently the peasants must have laboured to cover those barren slopes with so much rich fruitage; and see again how prettily their gardens are laid out. This cannot have been merely from motives of profit. Oh, no! these simple-hearted people love their own quiet vale. They feel happy when within its shadow, and would not, I believe, for any earthly sum, change its quietness and peace."

"But what is the quietness and peace of rebels, I mean of heretics?" asked her companion, in a musing tone; for with him religious and political defection, notwithstanding all his practical liberality, were nearly identical.

"See you, in your turn, Alicia, that chapel which your ancestors built in their midst; and know you that they neglect its worship and scorn its rites. For myself I cannot afford to waste sympathy on any such people; they may be peaceable in their lives, unobtrusive in their manners, but this is by no means their whole duty; and, though I hate moralizing, I must say that they deserve their fate."

"Louis, Louis!" interrupted Alicia, "speak not harshly of those whom you do not know. My request concerns them; but I will not urge what now I see you are in no mood to accept."

"I would not deny any of your wishes, dearest. But what can you ask concerning these people that is in my power to grant? Even to refrain from allusion to them is desirable, and for reasons you well know."

"I perceive your feeling," said Alicia, mournfully. "It is that I share in the obloquy and scorn supposed to attach to these people, who, with all their imagined and imputed

wickedness, have cast away neither the Bible nor its precepts."

"I am no theologian, my dear Alicia; but surely ours is a better and a purer faith. It has been sanctioned by the devotion of ages, and to cast it away, to descend to an argument springing from unenlightened minds, to whims and fancies, were to prove recreant to the noblest sense of the soul, that of dependence on superior wisdom. We should always side with experience. Say you not so, Alicia?"

"Why should not the acceptance of the Bible be sufficient, nay, all that should be demanded of these people? Is not the sum of all religion to perform constantly deeds of mercy, and to keep one's self unspotted from the world?"

"I had no conception you were so good an arguer," said the Count, musingly. "What you say is true, but more is needed. Another stream than that of revelation has flowed by man's path from primeval times,—a stream that illustrates and developes Christianity, and to whose current the Church, for our confidence, often points. During my late journey, I was gazing on the milky way. What a crowded concrete mass of matter it appeared! and yet astrologers descry amidst it innumerable suns. And so, dearest, though you understand not all the teachings of the Church, you might surely conclude, from its many points of undoubted light, that the whole proceeds from a divinely illuminated and exhaustless source."

Alicia wondered in herself to hear her lover thus marvellously discoursing.

Truly the Count had every earthly motive to feel interested as to the effect his words might produce, had every reason to summon up his energies; he had spoken with an energy and persuasiveness worthy of a clerical member of the religion of which he scarcely assumed himself to be the advocate. In that day a theoretical and unconditional assent to the tenets of the Church was admitted as the bounden test of Christian discipleship; in what age could less have been demanded? To refuse assent to any one of these was to impugn the character of the Church to infallibility: a character it had sought nobly to sustain through many ages and to justify amidst all circumstances. Those who thus believed were bound for conscience sake to maintain the jurisdiction of St. Peter; and any want of zeal was properly construed into a want of religious veneration. It could not be otherwise. And happier were the members of the established Church, thus restrained to an unconditional surrender of individual opinion,—a surrender which in few instances was felt as grievous, and till this time was scarce even regretted,—better, we say, was this, than that loose liberalism which afterward found its way into more than one Protestant Church, the liberalism which, so far from presenting any landmarks, so continually shifts to and fro the standard of truth—so misconstrues, so doubts and combines the pure precepts and doctrines of the Bible, that its adherents are more and more mystified, and while in the constant practice of making new discoveries, are for ever learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth. The Huguenots, happily, were so far restrained by past prepossessions, by long cultured habits of mental

discipline, as not to have trespassed thus far, but to be disposed to receive with meekness the engrafted word which was able to save their souls.

Alicia still continued silent, and her lover would probably have immediately reverted to another, and to him a more agreeable topic, but that her mind was so strongly bent on this. He drew her fondly to him, as he said, "I ask your pardon, dearest, if I have offended you; but what was your request?"

"It can serve no purpose," said Alicia, "now to disclose it. These people must look to Heaven for aid. I had hoped, vainly hoped, that you would be willing, for the sake of your Alicia, to grant the request she makes, that you would use your influence to obtain a revocation of the decree."

"A revocation of the decree, Alicia! Impossible! You know not how these decrees are brought about; and even could my breath dissolve the enactment, that breath should be restrained. Besides, do you think me so mad as to seek, however strongly disposed, an amendment, the adoption of which would inevitably lead to an injurious, nay to fatal suspicion."

"Ah!" said his companion, in a mild and rebuking tone, "it is this union of policy and religion in the rulers of France that does the harm. I know well that it is neither the good bishops nor their curés who work these wicked deeds; it is the artfulness of those who, having proved traitors to their own special trusts, would thus exhibit their devotion to the state!"

"You speak violently, Alicia! You are getting ex-

cited. It is a localized, a narrow sympathy that can weep over the mild expulsion of the dwellers in this lovely valley, and not consider the evil otherwise resulting from the dangerous and contagious influence of their example."

"It is not selfishness, Louis; it is unity in feeling and in—"

The Count started. With all his knowledge of the religious delinquencies of his companion, he had not supposed that she would thus make a tacit and absolute confession of her views.

"It is a dangerous time to avow this," remarked Sir Louis. "A wild, foolish whim is bearing you away. You have in this part of France had too much seclusion; some melting mood—some poetry-stricken fancy that there is something purer, higher, better than the Church can show, possesses you."

"Say not so," said Alicia. "Were I assured you would continue to think thus, I might, indeed, have endeavoured to hide my thoughts; but even this I could not have done without dissembling. I did not wish to meet you with other than a smiling face and a light heart; but it is for the news you bring that I am sad; it is for the thought that the vale in which from childhood I have wandered is to be deserted by its tenants; it is more,—for all they are going to suffer, for all that your Alicia shall endure!"

"Speak not thus," said the Count, who perceived not the profound import of the last word; "in the lively amusements we shall presently engage in, all these dreary visions shall perish. Hark! the forester is sounding his bugle for the chase. Let us return."

As Louis bent down to kiss the tearful cheek of his lovely companion, he perceived a steady decision imprinted on the soft lineaments of Alicia, that told how little his last words had found entrance to her heart. The bugle just now sounded right merrily;—on field and forest, hill and flood, was spread the sweet ligh of creation. _ O who, amidst such a scene, with thoughts only of love, might not be judged happy! And yet in truth,

> "Like one pure rill that sudden shocks divide,
> In separate channels they have parted wide,
> To seek and fret their way into the main,
> But, till they reach it, never meet again.
> Yet long as Memory's trembling hand unrolls
> To them the record of life's early day,
> Gray, crag-girt valley! thou upon their souls
> Hast left a shade that shall not pass away."

The emotions of Alicia were visible less in her agitated manner and quivering features, than in the laboured breathings which escaped her lips. The Count, too, was evidently affected; and though the distance from the stream to the southern wing of the château, where the caparisoned steeds were now in waiting, did not exceed a hundred paces, neither could hide from the other an anxiety to close this painful interview—for it was but an interview, and not that sweet interchange of feeling which is the climax of true and fond affection. In his inmost heart, if the truth might only have been there revealed, the Count discovered an estrangement from the object of his choice, without any diminution of his respect. At this time, moreover, alliances were entered into with as much con-

sideration for family connexion, as though the happiness of life depended on the coincidence in the value of each party's social position and wealth; and truly, to the gay, volatile French, the immemorial custom of retaining the distinctions of rank was little regarded as a burden. The Count knew not as yet that his heart was more than tendril-bound,—that the love of Alicia was a reality that would presently triumph over all other considerations. It is no easy matter to fathom the depths of one's own heart.

The Duke and his son were awaiting on horseback the Count's approach. No sooner were the party in full view than the latter, forgetful of this sad interview, raised his cap with an air of triumph, and, shouting out with might and main, stepped in advance of Alicia; then bowing to Blanche, who stood within the balcony, he sprang on the remaining steed. The whole party, preceded by foresters, bounded on towards the forest, which stretched in a westwardly direction more than thirty miles.

It was not long before they had disappeared from the view of the two sisters;—Blanche and Alicia had again met.

"Weeping already, Alicia!" said Blanche. "Remember this is a gala-day. What makes you sad? Some little jealousy—some story of Racine—some thought, that present bliss is too—"

"Nothing of the kind, sister," rejoined Alicia. "You know well the heart at times must grieve."

"But this is such an unseasonable time to do so. Ah! my dear Alicia, those religious mists have bound you hand and foot; they have clouded your bright spirit, before so sedate; they have exhausted your liveliness and your joy.

Alas! what have they not done? Let us come within and practise some of the liveliest songs, for on their return the Count and Victor will certainly ask for something of the kind. Let me see: do you not remember that beautiful song commencing—

Through Nature's blossoms strewing,
One footstep we are viewing,
One flash from golden pinions!—
If from Heaven's starry sea,
If from the moonlit sky,
If from the sun's domains,
Looked not Love's laughing eye—
Then sun and moon and stars would be
Alike without a smile for me!
But oh, wherever Nature lives,
Below, around, above,
Her happy eye the mirror gives
To thy glad beauty, Love!"

Alicia upon this kissed tenderly again her sister; for much as these two sisters differed in the characteristics of their minds and the tendencies of their opinions, they had ever mutual affection for each other; each had imparted to each the warmest love; and though, of late, a chill had resulted from the withdrawal of Alicia from the daily rites of the Roman Catholic communion, it had not passed to any sensible diminution of confidence, except in this, that Alicia now ceased to communicate to Blanche her deepest, her inmost feelings, to give expression to those sweet feelings, which all religions, however simple their rites, and however solemn and mysterious, will, with devout worshippers, unfailingly excite.

Alicia had no reason to withhold and did not cease her delight in portions of the Romish ritual; her heart, following its native instincts, clung to the symbols of the unseen and the spiritual. Indeed, though she acknowledged not more than would the Huguenots, she had continued to attend their grand and impressive service, and anticipated with some degree of sadness its entire loss. The Huguenots themselves were wont to regard her with reserve, by reason of her unwillingness to acquiesce in their extreme conclusions, and it was not till other events had transpired, —events that tested her fidelity to the utmost, and drew from her such sacrifices as the young maidenly heart has seldom been called to make,—that they fully received her into their confidence.

The song that Blanche had proposed continued unsung: her own mind was at this time in full, untrammelled gaiety, wandering too far and over too wide a surface to allow it to rest on any one certain thing; the heart of Alicia, on the contrary, was riveted on a theme to which she dared not give expression; at times she started, with the vehemence of her thoughts—thoughts which the more she strove to hide, the more would she unwittingly make known.

"Now tell to me what ails you, my dear sister?" said Blanche, seating herself at the same time beside Alicia, throwing around her, her warm, loving arms; "you are sad when you should be gay."

"Is it impossible for you to divine the cause, Blanche? Heard you not my father's muttered words?"

"Ah! let me consider," said Blanche, stooping down and

eyeing a small figure in the carpet, as though the better to abstract her thoughts; "I do remember now that his manner was unusual as he mounted that fiery charger. Yes, and as he mounted he cast a look at you that was—let me think!—it was not loving." Blanche paused, and then again broke out in quite a different tone, yet without any change in her affectionate manner: "You act wrongly, Alicia, very wrongly. All would love you more, and all would be happier, if you only would recant those ridiculous opinions which the ignorant people in the valley have been simple enough to tell you of, and you to adopt."

"And let me tell you," said Blanche, in a whispering tone, "you are thus incurring for yourself much danger, and for our entire household much obloquy."

"Then the line of separation is drawn already," returned Alicia, who, without looking at her sister, continued to view mournfully the portrait of her mother—a woman who had claim to the noble lineage of the family of the Medici, and who, with an expression befitting her illustrious origin, bore that sweet tenderness of feeling which wins while it subdues.

"Answer me, my sister," continued the unremitting Blanche, "why will you persist in this dangerous course? Whence do you get this strength of will, so far beyond your years—so extraordinary, so unaccountable? Is it to continue or to cease? Hear me, my sister, and consider too the effect that your conduct will have on the Count. He has already been made aware of your predilection; he has, perhaps, remonstrated with you. Be sure that his love w

never lead him to an identification with your wild fancies; he would as soon think of blotting out his hopes of heaven, as of withdrawing from the communion of a church which affords whatever is necessary to salvation. Even now he appears to have taken the alarm. I noticed a restlessness in his eye that betokens but little satisfaction with whatever communications you have made to him. Yes, that unsatisfied and contradictory expression was visible beneath all his gaiety. If you change, why may he not? For his sake, then, if not for your own,—for his sake who has so much to gain, so much to lose,—undo your present mind. You are beguiled, my sweet sister, with vain and foolish dreams. It is not for you to hold sympathy with the rude peasantry; what can they divine of truth? 'Tis said they possess concealed copies of the Scriptures, but out of the pale of the Church, how shall they or you be assured of finding for its texts a certain meaning?"

"Stay, stay, Blanche—say no more. I see all, I feel all. I am conscious of the penalty; its most certain portion—banishment from this pleasant home by an angry father."

"I will not hide from you the full danger," responded Blanche, who supposed her words were now making an impression. "My father has already spoken to me with much bitterness as to your course, and made many threats. What the end will be I know not; but this is certain, that he will endeavour by every personal means, and if this fail, by appeal to the lawful tribunal, to compel at least an external acquiescence, so that our honour may be saved. Why do you thus insure to yourself punishment, my

sister? I feel for your position on account of this declension, but I cannot have any sympathy with it."

Blanche looked to Alicia for an answer. Alicia folded her hands, laid her warm cheek on her sister's shoulder, and then let fall those tears which Tasso has described by the image of those drops that precede a shower—the forcings of a mighty tide that is heaving with its own force, but has not yet commenced its flow.

"Blanche, look at me, and tell me—is there no way of hope? I adore the same Saviour, and worship the same God."

"But you partake not of the mass."

"I do accept it."

"But from the hands of those who profane the rite," exclaimed Blanche vehemently. "I will tell you the words of my father—'Think you,' said he, 'that the world would stand, that society would be kept together, that its rabble masses would be restrained from the consuming fires which jealousy and envy are always feeding, if the doctrines of the holy Church were to be held loosely? The defection of Alicia may seem unimportant to herself; but to ourselves, and to the interests of the true Church, especially at this time, it is of serious importance.' These were his very words. Why will you brave his wrath? Return, my sweet sister, and let the blessed Virgin be again your protector."

Blanche was yet in uncertainty as to the bent which her sister's mind had taken. Whilst telling out the penalties, Blanche had never for a moment dreamed that her sister would persist in exposing herself to them; had it been so,

she would, under the instruction of her confessor, have shown a decided antipathy to any further communication till the hoped for change had come to pass. And truly, had the sentiments of Alicia not been interwoven with her very existence, such a course would, perhaps, have been not the least of effectual modes; for Alicia was of that trustful, loving nature which climbs around, yea, builds itself upon the love of others.

But the great secret was as yet deeply hid—none yet were worthy to, or could share her inward thoughts, her pains or purposes. What more Blanche said, or what more Alicia answered, need not be told: when they parted each one felt the other to be more a stranger to herself, and each looked (though how differently!) to the speedy return of the hunters.

CHAPTER V.

"'Tis night, and the landscape is lovely no more;
I mourn: but, ye woodlands, I mourn not for you;
For morn is returning your charms to restore,
Perfumed with fresh fragrance, and glittering with dew."

ALICIA, from the casement of a small sitting-room that adjoined her chamber, was the first inmate of the château who descried the returning party. She had been engaged, as well as had her sister, in making preparations for the evening. Every possible arrangement having been made, she was now bending thoughtfully over a light projecting branch of alder wood, the fragrance from which scented the air of the whole chamber. The branches of a rare vine had clustered round the window from which she looked, and almost wholly shrouded her form. With her mild, sweet, and saddened countenance, she might there have stood, in the view of some gifted artist without, or to any one with a spark of true sentiment, for the apparition of a young nun, looking out from a seclusion already too still and too protracted to happily endure.

"They come!" said Alicia to herself, "nearer and more near. Why does my foolish heart beat so? Let me restrain both my joy and my grief. Sufficient for the day is both its good and evil. I will try not to interfere so much with the happiness of others." And the gentle girl, looking afar, watched, through many a long, blue woodland aisle, the flashing forms of the richly caparisoned steeds, and the dark dress of the riders, not yet clearly distinguishable. Now and then a horseman would strike out

from the party, and, with the sky for a background, appear in grand relief. At intervals the whole group would seem, as they descended to a dell, to sink beneath the earth, or be lost in the numerous ambuscades the woods afforded, and which lay in gigantic masses in every direction. At length rose ringing in the air the sound of the clear horn, and presently was heard the bark of the fleet dogs, conscious of having, in the few hours that had elapsed, sustained their well-earned reputation. As the full cavalcade came in view, emerging from some dusky underwood, it was truly a grand sight to see the lofty and graceful appearance of the noble riders. The lover of Alicia descried her as he neared the gate leading into the court-yard; and at the instant raising his cap, he saluted her with a grace worthy of the most accomplished knights of the zenith days of chivalry.

The second reception of the visiters was certainly as cordial as they could possibly desire. Few as were the apparent resorts for beguiling the remaining time of that day, and of this eventful visit, there was no danger of any failure—indeed, without music, walks in the conservatory, rambles in the vineyards, visits to the falconry, boating excursions in a light canoe that rested swan-like on the wide-spread waters of what, in the exaggeration of a local geographical map, might have been termed a lake—appearing, as it did, the larger by its many windings, and the jutting projection of rocks clothed with shrubbery—the society of the sisters would have been sufficient to prevent that sad, sombre hue, which is apt to come upon one in the long summer days of idleness and rest.

When the first evening of this visit came, and its soft, mild light was tinging every object that looked toward the west with a mellow glow, when the pure, fresh breeze, that wakes with night, began flowing from its unknown source, pressing in its motion every leaf and shrub, and making the outspread waters to ripple unceasingly, Alicia and the Count again met, and in that most romantic of all romantic places, a vine-clad porch that opened towards the lake, which skirted the western extremity of the château.

"See you yon bird," said Alicia; "the bird that has just wet its wing in those perturbed waters? Why does it not return to its nest? the day is spent."

"It cannot choose now to roam; true, there is a reason for your question. Probably its nest has been destroyed. In yon bush about which it flies, the bush trembling and hanging over the brink, must have been suspended its light nest. Who would not have thought it there secure?"

"I grieve for the little winged flutterer," said Alicia; "and yet human griefs, the griefs of our fellow-creatures, are greater, and these we heed not."

"You are thinking again of the inhabitants of the valley," said her lover, as he quickly recalled the conversation that had so lately passed. "Thinking of them again! Certainly they are to be pitied; but not yet—they are not yet gone, and when gone, it will be their own choice. I would not grieve you, dearest, but I must tell you that your sympathy with those people has hurt me much, and has already served as an embarrassing restraint between us. Your sweetness of disposition seems, in this

instance, to have overcome your customary sound judgment."

"Would you change love to friendship?" said Alicia, musingly.

"That I never can, my Alicia; but yet our meeting is vain, our future union impossible, as long as this presumptuous fancy of a better faith continues. Submit to my assurance of its folly; suffer this kiss to seal your consent."

But Alicia, knowing how much the proffered token implied, held aloof. She perceived the impossibility of disposing the mind of her lover to a calm investigation of the basis of difference, whilst her own good judgment acknowledged the justice of not allowing his success in life, by any longer alliance with herself, to be so seriously interfered with as it must else evidently be. In that moment her full resolve was taken; whatever assertions she might make, it was plain he would never tacitly consent to a present withdrawal of their engagement; he would not, for years to come, bring himself to the belief that she would abide by her present religious convictions, and that she would not some day return lamb-like to the one fold of the Church.

With all his love for Alicia, however, the Count was not one who would allow himself to be carried away by blind enthusiasm. Like one who has ascended a mountain to secure the flowers whose beauty had delighted him from below, and finds them yet beyond his reach, growing only on the borders of a dark abyss, so he, when deeming his highest hopes near consummation, beheld them, if not

dashed down—for this his own proud and lofty spirit would not confess—indefinitely removed, and this by a cause which the whole strength of his iron will could not do away with. Happily to the warm enthusiasm of his nature, the Count Louis added that habit of cool and cautious policy, with which those bred in courts are so familiar; and, in place of needlessly grieving over the delay, or regarding Alicia as irrecoverably lost, he busied himself in planning how he might effectually countervail her present mind and temper.

Alas, poor Alicia! thou too wert like the nestless bird; already the shades of evening, the shadows of night, steal around thee, and thy heart is overflowing with emotions and thine eyes are wet with tears, and the present to thee has no joy, and the future no hope!

The festivities that night in the château were of the most brilliant and pleasurable description. Additional arrivals of visiters imparted high exhilaration. The banqueting hall was a square room, cased in oak, its walls covered with scroll-work and carved figures, many of these rudely made, but all bearing reference to feats of the illustrious ancestors of the noble house of D'Angouleine. No sooner had the festive board been swept, than the gaiety and hilarity of the company became almost unrestrained. Huguenots were forgotten, and, apparently, every source of general discontent and every private care. Most of the squires composing the company were possessed of large landed property, their chief claim to importance. With these were some of the fairest and most bewitching beauties—though none looked so fair

and gentle as Alicia, or so graceful and bland as Blanche. The conversation carried on possessed, notwithstanding its evanescent character and whimsical tone, a vigour which has now almost disappeared from the social circles of France. With the lightest, were also maintained the weightiest themes, as well in the full career of excitement as in the pauses which came from exhausted spirits, like the pauses in a storm.

Blanche exerted every effort to sustain the vivacity of the guests. Alicia, completely retired, and almost hid behind the blaze of two huge chandeliers, endeavoured to appear perfectly composed, although her fair brow, formed for the sweet expression of quiet happiness, was plainly overcast with the deep dyes of sorrow. She observed that her father, notwithstanding all the banqueting, was subject to gloomy, even painful thoughts. Almost without intention, his eyes would follow in the direction of herself and the Count. They sat near each other, but held no conversation; neither did the Count appear entirely free from impressions of a kindred nature to those which troubled his noble host. At once wearied with the day's amusement, and its bitter revelation, the forced journeys which his haste from Paris had occasioned, increased the excitement.

Thus hour after hour went by, uncounted and uncared for; but, O! how long to be remembered in the lives of those two—perhaps in the lives of all. It is even so: the hours most heedlessly thrown away are often those in which our fate is being worked out in its unchangeable-

ness; the pearls which we set at naught are too often those only which can enrich us.

When the evening had grown late, and mirth—for all mirth must have its end—had become exhausted, the Count left a knot of gentlemen with whom he had been engaged in conversation, and approached Alicia, with the evident intention of essaying to relieve her depressed spirits. With this purposed view, he drew near to her a fine old harpsichord, which, on account of its antique frame, formed one of the most striking and interesting articles of furniture in the room. Alicia would gladly have desisted from calling out the slumbering tones; yet how could her heart resist what might prove the last request of one so dear! A gladdening smile fell on her features, as she slowly bent over the instrument. In a moment more, she had struck the note of one of those simple airs to which the pious Huguenots had arranged their hymns. Now and then, the voice of the player chimed with a plaintive murmur in, as though speech and sound at an infinitely remote distance, were following the spirit into brighter regions.

The Duke stood by, gazing on his daughter as she sung, and feeling it to be impossible to view her without gladness, or without thoughts of the noble station she was so fit to grace. Had gifted mind and rare accomplishments ever been able to shield their possessors from earth's griefs, Alicia might then have been deemed more than fortunate; and was she not in the computation of the great *hereafter* to be still deemed so? These gifts, were they not of equal value when appointed to subserve holier

purposes than those connected with social gratification—to shine beside the ill and dying in distant homes—to fulfil every rule of obligation, and every law of love?

The chords of the instrument had just ceased to sound, and the attentive audience were about to solicit a repetition of the mellow and bewitching strains, when the tears which Alicia had endeavoured to repress, rose to her eyes, and trembled on their lashes. She immediately rose, and whispered to Blanche to take her place. The laughing girl assented, for Blanche, of all things, loved most to play and sing. As her sister stole from the room she, with the sweetest possible *naïveté*, laid hold of the instrument, and sweeping the strings with the freedom of the bards of old, sent out a gushing and ever-changing strain of melody that enchanted all present. Meanwhile the cheeks of the player glowed with the warm lustre of her spirit; in her eyes, which wandered where her fingers wandered, but were yet occasionally lifted up, there was the articulate speaking of delight. She was in her own element, the element for which she felt herself, if not born, at least elected. There was this difference in the players,—that while the haughtiest, proudest brow, was by these soul-stirring strains made to look haughtier, prouder,—while the bosom heaved and the eye flashed, as if with electric ardour, and in obedience to strains that told of the stirring spirit of martial deeds, an effect heightened by the dark moveless figures on that old ancestral hall,—the airs of Alicia had seemed to soften every heart, to put off from each, while they lasted, all vain-glory, and make each feel better, and disposed to holier aspirations. It was the low, cool zephyr of the

skies, stealing along through a heated atmosphere no more refreshful.

"You play nobly," said a venerable knight who sat near the singer. "To hear such music is worth leaping a mile of ditches."

"I do not play for praise," said Blanche, "but for amusement."

"Amusement, then, let it be," rejoined the noble; "but amusement, like everything else, has its degrees, and should therefore be credited with praise and dispraise. But where is your sister, Alicia? how sweet would those low tones be after this excitement?" In this opinion the entire company appeared quietly to acquiesce. This little incident,—these widely different effects, discovered the characteristics of difference in the two sisters—the one attracting, winning, and keeping by force of her native gentleness,—the other stormy in her movements, and compelling admiration.

Alicia, careless of applause, and with no new joy to gather, had, on leaving the great hall, sought the privacy of her own chamber, conscious of an oppression which the whole force of her nature was unable to throw off. Her only, but all-sufficient resort, was prayer; and beneath the eye of her heavenly Father, who seeth in secret, she poured out her supplication for grace to enable her to make a proper decision at this eventful crisis, and to act accordingly. On rising from her knees, she re-opened the note which that morning she had received from Annie. Her cheek for a moment flushed and faded as she read; but no tear dimmed her eye, nor did she experience any faintness

of spirit in view of the resolve she had to execute. Whatever had been her struggles in the contemplation of deserting the paternal mansion to share with the Huguenots their lot in exile, there now followed a clear and calm conviction that this was the appointed will of heaven.

What Alicia had already heard from her father and lover, convinced her that longer concealment of the full extent of her faith, as far as it differed with the established one, was neither desirable or possible, and for this reason she decided on availing herself of the opportunity now offered. Her heart was elevated by its recent communion with her Creator, and her feelings soothed even to calmness, —the issue of that sacred courage which rises as the waves of trouble rise, looking over and above them to the bright light which gleams from heaven.

It was while thus engaged, that Annie, the daughter of the Huguenotic family, applied, by a timid and well-recognised tap at the chamber door, for admittance. Though this was not actually a concerted meeting, Alicia understood that now was the time, and this the opportunity, for the concertment of the needed measures for escape, so as to join unobserved the Huguenots, who, on the following night, were to take up their march towards the distant valley of Piedmont. Having admitted, and then again made fast the door, Alicia bade her companion to communicate whatever she further knew, in addition to the contents of the note received that morning. The peasant girl in answer, described the plans that had successively been proposed and rejected in the counsels of the Huguenots. There still continued amongst them, however, but one opinion,

namely, that they should leave the vale in advance of the time decreed by the government for their departure. It was well known that powerful emissaries from Italy were now at work in attempting to induce the French government to carry out against them the utmost rigours of the law. There was, in short, every reason for their speedy escape from the soil of France—banishment from which could by no possible means within their control be eventually prevented.

The interchange of mutual grief between these two confidants, might, if witnessed, have affected others than themselves; the peasant girl, indeed, had little that she did not carry with her: a pure and guileless heart, that still continued trustfully to hope, and all that delightful freshness of spirit, which to scenes the most sterile and severe, can impart its own warm, enchanting hues.

"The night wanes," said Alicia, as the hands of the porcelain-cased clock over the boudoir, pointed to the hour of eleven. It was then time that they should part. A few moments from this Annie was in her own room.

CHAPTER VI.

"Fair be the memory of that dreamy valley.
I go! I go!—and must mine image fade
From the green spots wherein my childhood played,
By my own streams?
A boon, a talisman, a memory give
To shrine my name in hearts where I would live,
For evermore."

F. HEMANS.

MORNING is beautiful in every land. That which on the morrow rose over the valley of the Huguenots—for so it has ever since been recognised in the annals of tradition—was impregnated with a delicious mildness. The restful clouds wore the deepest tint of autumn; a countless multitude of flowers yielded up their fragrance with the dew; the birds chirped their merriest notes: they, indeed, had received no warning to flee away! The golden light as it rose on the extended region of woodland, that made and still makes the chief charm of this secluded province, chequered the foliage with a changeful brilliancy, that, without violence, might be compared to the spangled surface of the ocean's moving waves. This light soon reached the high dewy grass beneath, and then began to peer into every dim recess, leaving the space more dark which had resisted its gentle influence!

Alicia at an early hour, and while few in the château were yet astir, partook of a light breakfast, and imme-

diately, without acquainting any one of her intention, equipped herself for a walk. With hurried steps she gained the park gate. There assuring herself that she had not been watched, she drew her crimson hood over her face, and took the path leading to the valley. Not a breath was stirring; not a sound to disturb the stillness but the birds as they flew from tree to tree with their sweet song, and the kingfisher as he swept over the stream in search of prey. Alicia was not long in reaching the minister's cottage. Putting aside the encircling vines about its gate, she touched the latch and entered. Her pastor's benevolent face instantly assumed a smile of inexpressible joy at the sight of her, whom he had fondly named the pet of his flock.

"And what is your decision?" These were the first words spoken. They were the words of deepest import. The pastor had scarce need to propound the inquiry, for while uttering it he read in the expression of the countenance of Alicia the answer which he sought, and immediately added: "Have you counted the cost?"

"The cost," said Alicia, "is more to me than any treasures that the earth can show; yet would I obey the voice Divine, and follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth."

"God in Heaven bless you, my sweet child," exclaimed the old man; "I see you have reflected and intend to act on the grounds which we considered in our last conference. Henceforth there is laid up for you a crown of life which God, the righteous judge, will give you at the last day."

"That day may not be distant," said his companion in

her tenderest tones, "for my heart is already heavy with the dews of grief."

"There is a dawn, there is a sunshine for souls seeking after truth," exclaimed the aged pastor, using that metaphorical and yet energetic style of language so characteristic of the Huguenots. "Error with its false brilliancy dazzles, and then darkens evermore."

The old man became absorbed with this one thought, and ceased to speak.

The cottage door again opened and closed. Alicia departed with a confidence more firm, though without her heart relieved from those emotions of intense anguish which her present position, and her supposed line of duty, had led her to adopt. She endeavoured to reach the château as unobservedly as she had left it; but although her path was neither observed nor tracked, the excited suffusion of the blood within her cheeks showed that her feelings had only recently assumed their usually subdued character. It was plain that Blanche on meeting her sister, had instantly noticed this; a warning to Alicia of the necessity of much watchfulness and self-possession to elude the concerned though affectionate notice of her sister, who knew every variation in her ingenuous countenance too well to mistake the nature of the feelings which might agitate her. The Count, if he observed, failed to give any token of his suspicions. He appeared, and evidently strove, to forget whatever of painful thought had transpired on the previous day; indeed, the multiform engagements allotted for this present day, prevented any direct allusion.

It was midnight when a gleam of light shot beneath the door of Blanche's apartment, and a light hand was laid

upon its latch. It was Alicia. Passing over to the bed on which lay her sister, she discovered her in a peaceful slumber. Yes, she slept—slept as the blissful sleep, without a shadow on her heart, or on her cheeks the traces of a tear. For a time Alicia neither spoke nor moved, but stood with her eyes riveted upon those beauteous features, from which she read half the history of her childhood; of the time when they were children playing in the vineyards of the South together. She now recalled, more powerfully than ever before, the assiduity and affection with which Blanche had fulfilled her dying mother's injunction respecting herself—"She is the youngest, nurture her." She had not gazed long when she dropped on her knees, and pressing the hand of the unconscious sleeper, prayed that Heaven would fill her heart with that love which passeth knowledge, and assures of a happy reunion in a better country. She would not wake her, for by this her purpose might receive an untimely delay. So she knelt silently in prayer, till the dull sound of a distant clock warned her that the time had come for departure. How holy was that place! how solemn that parting scene! Heaven, which is never wanting in its mercies, brought in that moment to the heart of Alicia a cheerful resignation to its will; and imprinting one kiss on her sister's lips, she laid on the pillow a golden locket of remembrance, and departed as she had come.

She had already caused to be conveyed to the house of the pastor whatever apparel she was likely to need, and nothing now remained but to leave, in the faith of a better promise, the home of her father. Everywhere in the châ-

teau was silence. As she listened fearfully, the clock in the distant church-tower again tolled out, and over the bed for evermore deserted, Alicia bowed her face and wept.

To the mind of the lovely Huguenot how well would the words of the poet then apply!—

> "But with thoughts eternal, now
> Gathered on her sober brow,
> And in her sad and tearful eye,
> Purged with heavenly sanctity,
> What to her were joy and mirth,
> All the light and love of earth!"

With one more prayer, and one more sigh, she left her room, glided timidly along the corridors, descended the stairway, and unfastening the garden door, found herself beneath the open sky, and in company with Annie, who had there appointed to meet her.

It was a lovely night; the air cooled the throbbing temples of the exiled one, and there was something even soothing in the gentle rustling of the breeze as it swept over the long grass, and rose amidst the trees.

"All things look lovely," whispered Annie, as the two stept upon the bridge, the first moment she had ventured to give voice to her thoughts—"I have heard we shall have sweeter, more beautiful nights in the foreign land."

"There is a night of the soul, Annie, into which the light of heaven does not enter; in which nothing is seen, and nothing known. Yet goodness and mercy shall follow us all the days of our life, and we will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever."

Midway on the opposite ascent, Alicia obtained a last look of her secluded home—a look that made her heart again throb, and her tears to flow. It was but a glimpse; and the two resumed their way, only stopping again when another hour chimed out. On approaching the pastor's home, Alicia instantly fancied that she heard the clang of arms within. It was more than a fancy; for on entering, she beheld their pastor's usually quiet room half filled with armed men, with whom were grouped their wives and daughters. The sight impressed her with the anticipated danger of the sudden evacuation, without, however, lessening her resolution. Every countenance was care-worn, though there was exhibited but little of that despondency which the circumstances might have been supposed to induce. The pastor went with whispered messages of strength to each one of the company, and was about asking a blessing on the enterprise. Deliberation had ceased; the time for action had arrived. The summons was ringing in each ear,

"What thou doest, do quickly."

The tramp of hoofs without the gate was the signal for departure; and no sooner was this known, than the taper that had hitherto burned was extinguished—all was instant darkness.

The door opened, and slowly the whole company passed out. Alicia pressed close to the side of Annie. The pastor, supported on either side by two stern men, was the last to leave that place of years.

CHAPTER VII.

"The day is lowering—stilly black:
Sleeps the grim wave, while Heaven's rack
Dispersed and wild, 'twixt earth and sky,
Hangs like a shattered canopy!
There, rolled in masses dark and swelling,
As proud to be the thunder's dwelling:
Whilst some, already burst and riven,
Seem melting down the verge of heaven."

It was in the month of October, 1523, that this party of refugees gained the borders of France. Vineyards, meadows, and groves were exchanged for bleak and desolate plains, on the extreme verge of which mountains, whitened by snow, rose like the spectres of ages. By night they were able to encamp at the base of these lofty piles—

"Whose most attenuated element is fit
For angel musings; and their snow-white copes
For angel rovings."

The excited group beheld in these Alpine barriers, the portals of a temple wherein the spirit might worship the Creator of its days without weariness or oppression. Now, for the first time since their departure, they felt assured of an entire severance from their enemies. Many an inquiring look had they cast back in their wayward journey, under the suspicion of pursuit.

It was evening when their feet first touched the gigantic ranges whose mightiness was to be their present deliver-

ance, and to prevent their final extinction. They properly, therefore, considered this evening as an eventful one. The children, wearied with fatigue, were soon lulled to rest; and then the gathered company, with the venerable pastor in their midst, sang what, with equal justice and beauty, might be termed "a new song." Elevated by devotional enthusiasm, they closed with the TE DEUM, that most sublime anthem, commencing with the words—

"*We praise thee, O God; we acknowledge thee to be the Lord!*"

Never in the history of the Church had this pious hymn, consecrated by the breath of ages, whether from the lips of kings or peasants, been expressed with more hallowed fervour. Like a voice of promise, it made glad the solitary heart of each pilgrim with the assurance of a high protecting power.

In this instance the Huguenots had departed from the minor formularies of their new ritual; for in excess of zeal, or because misled by a prudential motive for a more strict distinguishment, they had avoided whatever the established Church had appropriated to herself. The written word was almost the sole text-book of the Huguenots, and the constant grafting of its language into their conversation, showed how diligently they had conned its pages.

Morning had far advanced, when the company put itself again in motion. New preparations were now requisite for travelling safely the narrow passes of the mountains. The baggage mules, which were attended by the most athletic of the company, took the lead; then those which bore the devoted Huguenotic women and their children. In

company with these last, Alicia had quickly become a favourite, for her gentle tone and kindly manner, which insinuated themselves at once into the heart. Most of the men followed on foot: each one holding in his hand a staff pointed with iron, serving thus to make the footing more secure. There was, however, little danger to be apprehended.

In a few hours the entire file had entered fairly within the limits of the Alps. With that exquisite, poetic sensibility, for which the French are so deservedly distinguished, all were conscious that they had now entered amidst that scenery, which is at once the delight and wonder of the world. Constant exclamations of surprise discovered how great was their delight at the variety presented. At the base of a deep ravine rushed a foaming torrent, the tortuous windings of which evinced its strength, though it was at too great a depth to send up audible sounds. Above them, continually, were still higher ranges, and above these were the blue, blue heavens, into which eye could not but desire to look.

The first day's journey was, in respect to themselves, one of the most complete solitude: for they had purposely chosen an almost neglected pass. How strangely did the shadows of the next evening come! All paused instinctively, and without bidding, as the muleteers took up their evening song. This song was such as could scarcely consist with the existence of any saddening thoughts—clear, harmonious, and transporting. With thick darkness the vast and dizzy chasms were quickly filling; the sky seemed to stoop to absorb the weight of

rocks suspended over them; and there was heard for the first time a hollow murmur, like that of subterranean waters. Nor was there wanting a charming variety in the after days of this strange pilgrimage. The ever-varying tints of the sky, the mists which in a thousand forms wove themselves together, the dark pines girding like a sea each solitary mountain pile, and the swooping eagles joying in the glorious liberty of their nature, all these belonged to, and made a portion of the scene.

The second day passed as had the first. On the third day, the cavalcade had scarce been set in motion when it was compelled to come to a sudden halt. The experienced muleteers had discerned in a sky that seemed to others calm and cloudless, signs of a coming storm; and one of those storms which make up the romance as well as the danger of the Alps.

"It will be terrific," muttered the main guide, an old and gray-haired man, whose frame trembled as he spoke, not indeed with age, or fear for himself, but for those delicate women, over whom it would sweep as mercilessly as over the rocks that bared themselves as if made but for the endurance of elemental wrath. The tidings went from ear to ear, from mouth to mouth, like a wind that passes over waving corn, bowing each heart with apprehension.

The party were in a narrow gorge, the steep declivities of which so far from affording any protection, threatened to cast down at the first attack, their incumbent load of snow. Birds unobserved before, flew out from their hiding-places, screaming and fluttering in terror. In the distance the skies became involved in gloom, from the midst

of which would every instant start and rise like sheeted ghosts, volumes of snow which the approaching whirlwind had detached and was dispersing. And then was heard the pealing thunder, followed by terrific flashes of forked lightning.

But as yet the air in the narrow gorge was still; and but for the screaming birds and the ghostly splendours of the sky, and the doleful sweep of rising winds—there was nothing immediate to alarm the senses. By the direction of the guide, to whose superior experience they had from the first committed themselves—the women and children dismounted, as quickly as possible. Stakes were then driven into the ground, and to these the mules in pairs were fastened. The baggage wagons were so arranged as to afford the utmost protection possible to those who might seek shelter behind them. These arrangements had scarcely been completed when the storm, heralded by a magnificent outburst of lightning, broke over them as it hurried by in all its terrors. It was now in the imagination of each one—for so the Huguenots afterwards described it,—as though the foundations of the earth were shaken, and its pillars were trembling at the voice of the Creator.

Not a word could be exchanged between the travellers. Alicia had instinctively nestled by the pastor while holding to her throbbing heart one of the babes which, as she rode, she had tended. The storm had continued with unabated fury for the space of an hour, when a voice was heard shouting from the rocks above; seeming, in the pauses of those terrific gusts, to hold the language of encourage-

ment. It was the voice of the guide; he had chanced, though almost too late, to recall to his recollection a retreat close by, which many years before had afforded, in similar straits, the needed protection to a party of travellers. The muleteers were not long in comprehending him, and one by one the Huguenots mounted a few feet of rugged precipitous rock, flanked securely on both sides by almost perpendicular rocks. The ascent was short; at its highest point they beheld below them the mouth of a cave.

Never was protection from the elements more welcome. As they followed the guide within, the darkness became deeper and deeper, till suddenly a bright light beamed out before them; which became stronger as they proceeded. In a short while, all found themselves ushered into an immense amphitheatre, half roofed with rock, on the sides of which hung trailing plants and countless galaxies of flowers. Far away, in the opposite direction to that which they had entered, and far above them, peered in, like hope upon despair, a patch of clear blue sky. To many of the simple villagers—if villagers they could be longer deemed —the phenomenon was incomprehensible; the prattling children were silent, supposing, no doubt, that they had entered some new world; and when the guide explained that the huge bastion into which all were now drawn, lay between two separate climes, was in fact the outer wall of that vast mountain kingdom, the oldest could not refrain from expressions of surprise.

"If God hath so beautified this cavern of darkness," exclaimed the aged pastor, "and hath, together with its beauty, made of it a place of refuge, will he not, also, be

as rich and free in those gifts which go to bless his people? yea, to this all the saints on earth and angels in heaven bear witness."

These words were spoken in that quiet and solemn tone which prepare the heart to listen, and in that listening, brings conviction. Immediately the pilgrims took up one of their sweetest songs, and in that place of silence, the stillness of which was only broken by the masses of snow which were flung like billows all around, they praised the goodness which had led them, and which they believed would still protect them.

The storm passed off as suddenly as it had come; the guide, who knew its duration by its strength, frequently went out to descry the first signs of its abatement. Soon a cloudless heaven invited all to journey on.

"Where shall we find rest, my father?" said Alicia as she emerged from the cave, holding in fear, the hand of the venerable pastor—with whom that title, expressive of veneration and love, was not unfamiliar. "I ask this not for my sake but for your own," continued Alicia.

"I am indeed grieved," said the old man, wholly forgetful of, or unnoticing the reference this question had to himself—to his own fatigue, with which Alicia sincerely sympathized—"I am indeed grieved at the sufferings of my people, and would to Heaven, that these were now ended. I know not how long we may be doomed to travel in these mountain fastnesses; many a weary league, doubtless, yet lies beyond us."

"The spot is about two days' journey hence," responded their guide, in rough, but neither unwelcome or obtrusive

tones; and seeing that Alicia and the pastor continued attentive, he added: "and a right quiet and a pleasant spot it is. It is just visible from the end of our guide route, and is half covered with wood, and cascades shoot down its sides. In the centre rises a knoll of land, the very spot on which to build a church. I can just imagine, too, how pleasant it would be to hear a bell tolling there every morn and every evening; how it would ring amidst the solitudes, so high and bare, that skirt the basin round, with a homelike, a rejoicing sound. Not that I would often hear it," continued the muleteer, "but that to others it might give joy. However, it was but a passing thought, and now the thought is told. Its lighted windows, too, on that airy woodland cliff, would they not gleam beautifully, when lighted from within?"

The guide, as if half ashamed to have given such vent to his ideas and feelings, ideas and feelings almost extorted by the gentleness and open-heartedness of his hearers, pressed immediately forward to join the advanced body.

On the evening of the eighth day, and from a lofty ledge of rocks, the Huguenots descried the valley of Piedmont, the vale which the guide had so enthusiastically dwelt upon. Though the Huguenots had not sought it out for earthly beauty, they could not gaze on the lovely panorama without praise, and an emotion of joy, heightened by the assurance that they there had of its lasting and peaceful possession. The hills of perpetual, though not of unclouded beauty which girded it, might well foster the spirit of devotion. None, they felt, could live amidst them, and not feel their thoughts continually led up to Heaven.

Beautiful was the sunset light, as it poured down upon that valley, and sweet the mellow radiance as, tint by tint, it died away. The mountain-tops around shone out with splendour, long after all was dark and unseen below; separated from the earth, those snowy summits seemed part of the bright pavements of the heavens; and one excited by imagination, might have in it looked for choirs of angels moving to and fro, or engaged in bright and calm communion.

The dawn of day beheld the entire party descending a dry and steep gorge, which, with many abrupt changes in its course, led to their purchased possessions far below. Their faithful guides had set out on return still earlier, yet not till they had been well, nay, considering the limited resources of the Huguenots, even munificently rewarded. At the parting there were, of course, mutual expressions of regret.

The Huguenots, on the departure of the guides, with this last link of connexion broken up, felt still more strongly their isolation, and, except amidst themselves, their utter loneliness.

The establishment of this colony in a new and untried region, is a matter of history. To trace, therefore, its early struggles—its many adversities—the dawn of assured prosperity—its final abandonment for a yet more remote, a more secluded spot,—is the work of other pens. Enough that no disastrous chances ever wholly thwarted the pure designs of its founders; that, if it seldom obtained accessions to its membership, it retained its inborn strength.

If a love of retirement and security had an influence in

determining the choice of this spot, it was for a length of time completely gratified. The bold and precipitous crags that rose round defied pursuit, able as they were to defend with a small body of equipped men the pass by which only it was accessible. And even the existence of that pass was a secret, communicated to them by their guides, the honesty and trustworthiness of whom, sustained immaculately as this character had been from generation to generation, could not be doubted.

The guarding of the pass was a very easy matter, therefore, and when accomplished, the entire colony turned at once to those pursuits which might provide them subsistence and comfort. The soil proved good and fertile; and, as again the season of the reapers came, the earth, that with rude means of husbandry they had tilled, afforded a sufficient yield to save them from the necessity of ever sending in quest of foreign supply. In process of time, neat and substantial cottages arose; for the Huguenots, being skilled in every kind of handicraft, were enabled to use to the best advantage whatever material was presented on which to work. Presently, on the knoll first pointed out by the guide, rose a simple church, in which their prayers and praises daily resounded. It had no spire, and was completely hid in a luxuriant ambush of trees. It was a picturesque sight to see the groups wending up towards it by a shelving path, or coming from it with their faces informed with the teachings of the word. Occasionally a chamois-hunter on the heights above, would startle them from their revery of happiness; but as the air closed again upon his

rapid path, or the report of a single gun died away, assurance would return, and they would smile at their own fears.

Alicia was charmed with the new abode; and notwithstanding many tearful regrets for the home of her father—a home to her now no more—she readily adapted herself to the exigencies of new circumstances, selecting as her employment the education of the young children.

Then, and not till then, were the heights and depths of her character fully developed. Powers of endurance and self-denial that, had she remained in her father's halls, might ever have slumbered unobserved, now shone in surpassing beauty. Cheerfully and unmurmuringly she endured her share of the privations to which the little band were exposed. Indeed, the secluded glens of that isolated valley witnessed scenes exhibiting, in hundreds of instances, the noblest traits of human character.

CHAPTER VIII.

"Of her spirit's grief
She never spoke. But as the flush of health
Receded from her cheek, her patient eye
Gathered new lustre; and the mighty wing
Of that supporting angel seemed to gird
Closer her languid bosom."

L. SIGOURNEY.

——"Joy! for the peasant, when his vintage task
Is closed at eve! But most of all for her,
Who, when her life had changed its glittering robes
For the dull garb of sorrow, which doth cling
So heavily around the journeyers on,
Cast down its weight, and slept."

F. HEMANS.

SOON after this settlement of the Huguenots, Alicia embraced an opportunity of addressing a letter to her father, in explanation of the cause of her deserting her home and those so dear to her; beseeching, too, his forgiveness, and begging him at least to remember her kindly, and let her name be still a household word. The time arrived which she hoped would bring an answer from France. With trembling anxiety she waited; but she waited long in vain. Month after month went by, and then, O joy! a letter was handed her in the well-known handwriting of her father. It had on it the Paris post-mark, at which she cast an eager glance of recognition. Deeply as her interest was excited, she yet felt it was the first token of an endless separation—the first lines from one whose anger she was prepared to abide, if conditional on the retainment of her present faith. Hastily retiring to a spot where she might be unobserved,

she drew the letter from her bosom, and cast one more look upon that dear familiar writing: her temples throbbed, and her heart beat rapidly. It was some moments before her trembling fingers could break the seal. When she did so, her most sad conjectures were confirmed—her own letter was returned. This was enough. She closed her eyes for a few minutes as if in prayer: thus gathering strength, she took courage to read the few sentences transmitted; they were brief and harsh, and read thus:—

"For the last time I address one who so far forgot her birth as to disgrace the name of her family, by communion with a set of ignoble heretics. I never can forget the insult of a child who left her home clandestinely."

"Cast off!" faintly escaped the lips of Alicia, as she crushed the missive in her fingers.

From the moment that Alicia read those cruel lines, a marked change was visible in her health. Her manner became languid, and her varying colour was followed by an unnatural paleness. In the mean time, winter came on in its most severe and boisterous form. Alicia, whose spirits were as precarious as her health, was forced to abandon her visits to the surrounding cottages. She herself seemed at first unconscious of any change, and continued quietly busy in her appointed task of teaching; but the time came when her frame was too weak to escape her own notice. The sure symptoms of that complaint which though slow is sure, were rapidly gaining ground. On her cheeks there presently appeared those signs known to those who have watched the progress of consumption. Her increasing weakness at length alarmed all; devoted friends observed

that she became thinner and paler from day to day; that all but the cheerful sweetness of her smile was gone. Yet as her body drooped, her spirit became more heavenly, and the expression of her face increased in interest and beauty. Never was the record of a holy character and holy life more plainly read, than on that lovely countenance, where peace and love seemed to have met together. She seemed to have no anxiety but to obtain, before departure, reconciliation with those whose memory she so dearly cherished in her exile. She at length determined to appeal once more to her father, and accordingly wrote the following letter, which she accompanied with a few lines to the Count, her lover, with a request that he would use his influence in gaining for the letter she confided to his care, a perusal, if for no other reason than that it was a dying communication.

"My beloved Father,

"The tone of resentment in which you last addressed me leaves me but little hope of your pardon; yet I feel that I cannot die until I again entreat your forgiveness. I will not afflict you any more in appealing to your compassion, which I might do by describing the anguish your letter gave me. In the long night-watches of my illness in this distant region your angry image is ever before me. I would fain tell all that is in my heart; yet my strength fails, and all I have power to do is to entreat your forgiveness, my father. These are the last lines your child will ever trace. Except this letter, all record of my love for you will ere long perish in the grave. Your affectionate child, Alicia."

The cold of winter, the changeful season of the spring, had been followed by the bursting bud and early blossoms of summer. The broad fields of the Huguenots lay smiling in the sun, which lighted up with ever-varying splendour the beautiful scenery of the Alps; the trees were clothed in green, and the gardens—for this pleasure the Huguenots could not forego—were filled with flowers. All things wore a look of peace and beauty, and a reigning stillness heightened this expression. It was in the afternoon of a sultry day, that Alicia, who seemed slightly to have revived, caused her chair to be wheeled to the window of the cottage which was her abode, and which was sheltered by dark and thick foliaged trees, which threw around it a grateful shade. Her chamber overlooked a good part of the surrounding country; its furniture was simple in the extreme, but beautifully clean and neat; some simple drawings and a tasteful book-case hung against the walls. The room was not wanting in other resources of enjoyment. On a small table, the polish of which was hid from view by its simple covering, lay a few paintings, together with an English Bible, and several articles of unfinished needlework. Artificial flowers, in slender jars, were set in the bright windows.

Seated upon a low stool at Alicia's feet was a young girl of striking grace and beauty. She was at this time warbling in a low tone one of the favourite airs of the province of Dauphiné; and every now and then turned towards the sufferer to smooth her pillow, or by words of kindness to soothe her shattered spirits. It was Annie Lorraine, the early confidant and friend of Alicia, and

now her attentive and gentle nurse. She watched day and night beside her dying friend, and none could have watched as well as she. A low, breathing air from off the mountains entered by the open lattice. We have omitted to tell that the little church too, endeared by so many associations, could be discerned in occasional glimpses from this spot.

A scene so beautiful might have produced its happiest effect upon a mind less sad than that of the invalid's, but she was thinking how soon the feet of the living would tread over her faded form. Notwithstanding all the affectionate efforts of Annie, she continued in an abstracted mood; her sorrow was too deep to be accessible to any earthly consolation.

Suddenly Annie started, for on looking without she had discerned strange figures on the loftiest edge of that precipitate path which formed a key to the Huguenotic abode. Regarding their appearance as an extraordinary event, she communicated her wonder to Alicia, who was still more surprised. As the two watched—for the sight of Alicia had become piercingly clear—they perceived the strangers hold a sort of parley with the sentinels of the pass; after which they commenced an unobstructed and rapid descent.

An hour passed away, and the intruders had disappeared in the purple gloom below, when suddenly the latch of the garden gate was heard to move, and two strangers entered. Annie, who conjectured at once who they were, as well as the object of their visit, arose and threw open the door of the chamber. Another moment, and the dying girl was

folded in the arms of her father. Exhausted with the excitement of the unexpected interview, Alicia could only articulate, "My beloved!" as she sunk almost insensible on his bosom. When she again lifted up her eyes she seemed bewildered, and glanced wildly around.

"Alicia, my precious child, do you not know me?" asked her father, in a tone full of tenderness. "It is your parent who is clasping you to his heart." She knew that voice, and recognised that form through the mists of death which were at this moment rapidly gathering over her senses; and raising herself a moment from the bosom on which she reposed, she looked in the face that hung anxiously over her, and saw indeed that it was her father. She tried to speak, but for a moment could not utter a word. The memory of all that had occurred, rose in her mind, and bowed in agony her spirit. Nevertheless, in an instant, a sweet, comforting smile passed her lips, and she murmured: "It is better, it is better to die thus. I am not deserted. Give me your blessing, dear father." She leant back exhausted on her father's breast, and her lover now bent over that hushed and deathlike form. He had not yet been seen; nor was his presence known.

"Alicia!" he whispered, "speak to me."

The dying girl raised her eyes and smiled, letting that smile settle on him who in a time long gone had received her earthly troth, and who might now, in that bright lingering look, obtain the assurance that she ever cherished sacredly in her heart that vow. As life ebbed away, her face put on a more radiant smile. In this smile—the token

of forgiveness and love—her countenance grew more lovely; and when even the heaving of her bosom had ceased, there it still lay calm and moveless, like a silvery strand which the receding waves again shall cover. Then all knew that she was dead.

The fading of a summer day—the tranquil floating into heaven, one by one, of the tints that have beautified and made glad existence, are the truest tokens with which to image forth the death of the fair Huguenot.

She died in the bud of being; in the early spring-time, when to the children of the earth life is sweetest. She died as she had lived; and not one villager that came to look on her failed to leave a flower on her bier. Tears and sobs made up the funeral ceremonies; and through the entire season the Huguenotic children would plant above her place of rest those plants that best might beautify it with their bloom.

Long since the remains of the lovely Huguenot have mouldered; long since her spirit became absorbed into the great good, of which it was a lovely and a holy portion; yet her name is still held in reverence by the dwellers of the Waldenses, and in the traditions of her native hamlet may be detected fragments of the story of her life, shining out in the serene and quiet brilliancy of truth.

FLORENCE DE ROHAN.

Florence De Rohan.

A FRAGMENT FROM THE HISTORY OF NAPOLEON.*

CHAPTER I.

"From the bounds of truth careering,
Man's strong spirit wildly sweeps,
With each hasty impulse veering,
Down to passion's troubled deeps,
And his heart contented never,
Chaseth its own dream for ever!"

Of the many dark and portentous events that continue in man's remembrance in connexion with Napoleon's wonderful career, there is none on which the historian has so often been called to ponder, as that of the death of the Duke D'Enghien.

That the death of the Duke D'Enghien was as unde-

* In 1804, the conspiracy of Pichegru was detected by Napoleon. During the examination of some of the prisoners, Napoleon ascertained that a person unknown had attended some of the Royalists' meetings, and was received with great ceremony and respect. The description of this unknown person, as Napoleon affected to believe, corresponded so well with that of the Duke D'Enghien, a son of the Duke De Bourbon, that he ordered that prince's arrest, and gave such minute directions as rendered it evident that his destruction was already determined. It

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served, as it was sudden and violent, all men know, and know so well, that the most subtle ingenuity has been continually baffled in the endeavour to provide for this act a solution that may not conflict with the most boundless admiration for the hero. But the common judgment of mankind, which seldom for any length of time can err, casting away such sophistry, has finally referred the most efficient cause of this deed to Napoleon's fear that the Duke D'Enghien might ultimately thwart his imperial projects. The connexion that the life of the Duke had with Napoleon's fortunes, Napoleon himself best could tell.

We will trace in outline the historical position of the

subsequently appeared that the Duke had not been at Paris at all, and that the stranger was no other than Pichegru. The Prince was arrested in his bed, on the night of March 15th, carried to Paris, and lodged in the Castle of Vincennes. Everything here was prepared for his reception, and *his grave dug*. He reached Vincennes at 7 o'clock in the evening, and was immediately summoned to attend the sitting of the commission on the spot. No evidence was brought against him; no witnesses were examined; a simple act of accusation was read to him, charging him with conspiring against France. The law in such a case required that the accused should be allowed counsel; but none was granted, and he was compelled at midnight to enter unaided on his own defence, which consisted in a simple and manly denial of any criminal practice whatever on his part towards the government of France. He earnestly requested a private audience with Napoleon; this was denied. They then proceeded, without a vestige of evidence against him, to pronounce him guilty, and under the peremptory direction of Napoleon, previously delivered, they ordered him to immediate execution; and in the fosse of the castle he fell, pierced by seven balls. The startling intelligence of the bloody deed excited both terror and indignation in every court of Europe, and was loudly stigmatized as a bloody and needless murder.—*Alison's History of Europe.*

event before bringing into view, and into as orderly an arrangement as possible, its concurrent incidents and circumstances. We can do no more; these incidents, these circumstances can by no possibility be *blent*—they possess neither unity nor fitness. The unchecked development of a wicked and powerful heart, like the flowing lava of a heated volcano, can make only waste and desolation,—all that is good it isolates. Yet, is its work not wholly uninteresting: affection, love, devotion, lifted high above its power, resembling in this the scattered stars of verdure on the pale steeps of Etna, bloom on us with an almost unearthly beauty—the preachers of mortal constancy and of spiritual immortality. Alas! as we gaze, the stems are scorched, the flowers fall, their fragrance ascends to heaven, and their dust is scattered!

The time of the mournful tragedy which constitutes this fragment, was when France, by the success of its arms, was executing plans unprecedented in their character. Setting aside all common maxims, and rejecting all common means, it had so weakened and dissolved powerful confederacies, that now Austria and England alone maintained the contest. The magnitude, together with the atrociousness of the deed, may be estimated by the fact, that though Europe at the period of its occurrence had become inured to scenes of blood, and could hear without emotion of armies being swept away in fewer days than had been required to collect and equip them, yet limited, almost personal as it was, it sent a thrill of horror through all the veins of European society, and effected a revulsion

of feeling that has no parallel in the moral annals of mankind.

In this issue it was that Napoleon's character shone out boldly and confessedly as the enemy of mankind. The steel-written declaration that no innocence, no rank, no sanctity could render life inviolable, dismayed even the most active promoters of the Revolution, who till now had imagined that the French nation, with an unexampled unanimity and perseverance, had recovered at last the long-lost rights of freedom, and that the system of government framed according to their wishes was surely tending to secure their happiness.

The tale of sorrow now to be opened out cannot, therefore, want a background—a background, the sombre hue of which is only illumined by the startled enthusiasm of those who would offer to Napoleon the highest worship that mortal man can give his fellow, those with whom, and it is no rare creed,

> "One murder makes a villain,
> Millions a hero!"

Just within the boundary line of Austria—whose extensive, populous, and fertile provinces had excited at once the envy and jealousy of Napoleon—and on a sloping plain, hemmed in by wooded plantations and dotted by a few straggling cottages, he and his great army halted, immediately after engagement in one of the most brilliant battles that history has recorded. Brilliant, but inglorious! Austria had presented a noble, though useless opposition. The French army, inspired by an almost supernatural

excitement, and aided by local circumstances, had fully evinced its own superiority. There was an advantage of another kind on which Napoleon had well and safely calculated. The dominions of the house of Austria being unconnectedly situated, a long time was necessary for the march of Austrian levies from one extremity of the empire to another. These battalions, too, being composed of a variety of nations, differing in manner and opposed in interest, it was frequently as difficult a matter to unite as to collect them. The resources of France, on the contrary, were immediately at hand; its soldiers were united in one compact body, so closely concentrated as to admit, on this account, of no embarrassment. As it was, the valour and genius of Napoleon was adjudged to have won the day; and from all the clamour and confusion common to a noisy and reckless army, there arose from this place of encampment, clear and distinct, those ingenuous ascriptions of praise on which Napoleon was wont to set so high a value.

It was evening as the division sent in pursuit of straggling parties of the enemy drew itself up above the base of the broad hill. As twilight deepened, the battle-field close by faded gradually from every eye, till again the lighted camp-fires brought portions into view, tenfold more horrible by the heavy crimson mist that hung around the flames, now made fantastic by sudden and furious gusts of wind. The officers of the army, elated by a success that promised a speedy advancement in their respective ranks, had relaxed a good deal of their usual discipline—the extreme severity of which was, perhaps, the only expressed cause of discontent on the part of Napoleon's sol-

diers—soldiers who followed him with a half-inspired devotion, ready at any moment to sacrifice life, if only they might enhance his fame.

As though fierce passion, in all its varieties, had been completely expended, the merry flow of mirth was to be heard in every division of the camp. The men, assembled in little bands, drank heartily to the health of their comrades. As night wore on, the best and idlest tales were told, the most wonderful feats were alluded to with evident gusto, each recital being occasionally heightened by a few fictitious touches, whilst all the meritorious deeds of the dead, who, alas! could never contradict them, were credited to their own mighty, potent, individual selves. It was no time for those gentle thoughts, which no deeds of blood can ever effectually eradicate from the human heart, and which, however pressed down, will yet always bloom again, giving to the oppressed a respite, and to the tyrant a season for repentance. Now and then a few of the loquacious and excited multitude would look sad and grave, rather perhaps from the undefined apprehension of retribution than from the workings of remorse. Each one needed rest; scarce one but felt too excited to wish repose. One regiment after another, however, dropped down exhausted, yet not to sleep; for from where they lay were heard unequivocally wide-awake expressions—the language of men wholly wrought upon by their inflamed senses. The officers of the army, with their usual private zeal, took good care to ensconce themselves in the private dwellings which happened to be situated at convenient distances on the slope.

The best one of these was, of course, reserved for their commander.

We have little to do with the external aspect of the French commander's headquarters. It was simply a pile of stone, of no describable shape or form, but bearing unerring marks of age in the ivy that clung about it. Its inhabitants had fled the previous night, and probably were not so much as thought of in this summary action of possession. The light in the second story of the edifice flashed down on two sentinels engaged in the mechanical operation of pacing to and fro as guardians of the hallowed precincts. The interior of that apartment, only made noticeable by the presence of its transient guest, exhibited an extreme paucity of furniture, such furniture, however, as preserved in itself a memento of better and richer times.

A high and massive mantel-piece, rudely carved, extended over a fire, made up of every burnable material that could be laid hold of. The flames of this fire incessantly employed themselves in multiplying the shadows of three antique chairs; meanwhile, on an oaken table, a lamp burned with a quiet and contented air, despite the gambols of the shadows on the floor and on the walls. Close by sat Napoleon, dictating a series of despatches to his private secretary; a task that was no sooner got through than the secretary was dismissed. Napoleon, now rising up, threw off the greater part of his military dress, and commenced pacing up and down that large, open chamber, with a restless and unsatisfied air: a mood to be remarked in a man whose placidity the most alarming incidents could hardly ruffle. At intervals his hand passed rapidly over his

brow, his lips were compressed, his countenance lost its meaning, and his eyes their animation.

It was at this time that one of his marshals, *sans cérémonie*, entered the apartment, and observing that Napoleon was struggling with apparently opposite emotions, determined to divert his attention. With a celerity that might have done honour to a courtier, he referred to the advantages sure to recur from the late conflict. His companion, with that ready command of thought that he possessed in so wonderful a degree, entered warmly into topics as diverse from his former meditations as possible. His remarks were so forcible as to show that his entire mind was thrown into them, and might even have discovered to one less intimate how long he had resolved the conquest of Austria in his mind, and with how clear a foresight he had formed his plans of policy respecting it. It was thus an hour passed away; and the visit terminated with mutual expressions of satisfaction. On the comparison of opinions, both had satisfied themselves that though the territories of Austria were disadvantageously situated in respect to foreign trade, its robust and hardy population would enable France to levy numerous armies, on which the imperial eagle might depend for conquest whenever the enthusiasm that characterized the French nation should, by any accident, subside.

Truly there was that which lay heavy on Napoleon's heart, for no sooner had the door of his apartment closed, than his broad chest heaved like the portentous motion of the sea at the approach of storms; his eyes, too, resumed their former dulness. Ah! had he felt for those who, for

his sake, lay stiffened in death beneath the open sky, this might well have been; he might even have wept. No, only of himself thought Napoleon, and of his destiny. Hitherto he had worn the warrior's helmet; he now remembered that no purple robes had yet fallen on his shoulders; he had not yet touched the diadem he coveted, and had pressed but the lower steps of that throne which, without warning, he afterwards ascended. Had his final greatness, in all its plenitude, been clear that night, with all its sequence of unutterable misery, the prospect might well have tortured him. It was not so; and yet his firm-set limbs shook at intervals, whilst, apparently unconscious of the act, he would take up and throw down the military cap that he had worn during the day, and continually loosen and refasten the button of his gray surtout. These incidents are not wanting in significancy, for Napoleon was wont to assume, on almost all occasions, a reposeful and cheerful manner. His present mood, if like the inroad of a sullen tide over golden sands, like a tide went as quickly down, giving way to that keen, rejoicing expression which feeds on bright, unalloyed anticipation. A disposition to cheerfulness was scarce ever absent from Napoleon, and even when his career as the conqueror of nations had for ever terminated, his buoyant mind brought round him at fitful seasons, in strengthened splendour, the charmed imaginings of youthful days. With such a man, was cheerfulness to be wondered at on the eve of a victory that made more tangible the object of his ambition? The wildest aspirations that can enter a mortal heart were about being fulfilled;—France would recognise him, with

new prestiges, as her most successful general; and what was more, his sagacity and intelligence had enabled him to estimate the extent of his power.

Hitherto France had exhibited the unpromising spectacle of a nation divided into a number of discordant factions; its military force in a disorganized state, without an army capable of looking the enemy in the face, and without any general in whom the nation could place confidence. The armies of the confederates, at the same time, were numerous and well disciplined, flushed by expectation, and encouraged by the most probable appearance of success—a condition met by the most complete defeat and disaster. As a statesman, Napoleon had reason to feel proud; for not only did he perceive the most successful method of subjugating mankind, but knew himself able to prepossess their minds in favour of any yoke he chose to impose. He had adopted a matchless system of proselytism, and one most easy to carry out. The minds of all classes in France had been put in a state of delusion from visionary theories, or become corrupted by the expectation of advancing their private interests in the bustle of innovation, and amidst the vicissitudes of political confusion. The only restraint upon their pride of belief that all things might be made new, was the fact that Austria had always been able to present a formidable front, affording an apparently insurmountable obstacle to the extension of French dominion and power in that quarter. Napoleon remembered this and rejoiced, and as he pondered in that empty room, he inwardly determined to assume a more dictatorial tone. He could not forbear withal from picturing his next return

to France, to that people whose interests had now become identified with his own. It was no *dream;* but again a shadow fell over the beaming pathway, and his heart underwent eclipse. His step soon became less rapid, and at intervals he gave utterance to sentences abrupt, impassioned, but almost meaningless. A calm and quiet gravity succeeded; and seating himself upon a chair, he fixed his eyes on the fire, which an attendant, who had just entered the apartment, was piling up. In a short while, and probably without intention, he bent over the outspread map that lay on the table at his side; but, strangely enough, a roll of parchment rolled down upon it: the sight did not please Napoleon, and again he relapsed into his former listless mood. That parchment was the undespatched order for the immediate execution of the Duke D'Enghien, and lay here awaiting his signature. God alone knows the unbidden thoughts that pressed round Napoleon during that inward conflict of conscience with the darkest and the most retributive passions. A moment more, and smiles of mockery were traced on his stern features, as if at his own imagined weakness. Napoleon was forgetful that his hesitation sprung from the very humanity of the nature that he wore vindicating itself, despoiled and dimmed in glory as it was.

"This must not be," he exclaimed at length; "time flies, and—'what thou doest do quickly.' Why do I hesitate? Let this man be weighed against the millions that have perished, and what is his worth?" In an instant more the scroll was opened and the mighty hand of the conqueror grasped the pen; but ere that pen could touch the

document, a loud challenge of the guards without arrested his attention.

"A friend," was the reply. At that late hour the rejoinder was perfectly audible to Napoleon, who, glad of interruption, rose from his chair and walked towards the window. It was a night as beautiful with moon and stars as ever blessed the earth. His quick sight detected a lady mounted on horse, together with two attendants. The appearance of the three strangers he could not but regard as somewhat curious; the circumstance, at least, was sufficiently surprising to raise many a head from its uneasy pillow, and fix many a roving eye that fain would have caught glimpse of the intruders. Napoleon, at a loss to understand the object of the visit, stood motionless until an *aid-de-camp* opened the door of the chamber to request permission, on behalf of the visitant, for an interview. "There is a female without," said Dupont, for that was the name of the officer; "I take her to be a lady of rank."

Napoleon neither spoke nor moved, so the aid continued: "She rode up to our outposts in company with two attendants, and desired to speak with the commanding officer. Her business seems important." The French general was too good a soldier, and too heedful of his duty to suffer annoyance from a visitant at this late hour; and he accordingly directed the immediate admission of the applicant.

In a few moments a lady arrayed in deep mourning was ushered in. Her dress was evidently assumed for disguise; and the observant general discovered at a glance, what indeed no disguise could conceal, that she was pos-

sessed both of rank and station. The first sensation of the stranger, on finding herself in the presence of Napoleon and his aid, appeared to be that of an alarmed and shrinking delicacy; but quickly recovering her accustomed air of quiet dignity, she took an offered seat near the now smouldering fire. After a most embarrassing pause, Napoleon abruptly broke the silence:

"To what, madam, am I indebted for the honour of this visit?"

"General Bonaparte," was the reply, in a voice sweetly clear, "I wish to speak to you in private for a few moments."

"We will retire," said Dupont, with proper courtesy. As the last footsteps of the officer became inaudible, the lady threw aside her cloak and hood, which had effectually concealed her features. Her companion started in amazement; he could scarcely credit the evidence of his senses when he saw before him the lady with whom the Duke D'Enghien was known to have exchanged vows of affection, the consummation of which had been suspended by the Duke's untimely arrest. Napoleon's ultimate design respecting the Duke had plainly been anticipated. To conceal a momentary surprise, the perturbed warrior crossed the room and closed the door, which was still ajar. Returning to his seat, he said coldly,

"I know not whether to censure or admire the energy that has led the daughter of a Bourbon to enter my camp at this unseasonable time, although not unaware of the motives by which you may seek to justify this act."

The intruder instantly rose from her chair, dismayed at these studiously sarcastic tones, so foreign to human feeling and sympathy. Astonishment seemed to grow

upon her, till she looked more like a beautiful statue than a living being. As she sank down alarmed and exhausted, her face buried in her hands, tears—those most eloquent of witnesses to the heart's sorrow—flowed abundantly; but quickly recovering that dignity which never long forsakes a noble woman, she replied, in a half-reproachful air: "It is not necessary to tell General Bonaparte, that no trifling errand would tempt me to such a venturesome act; and that he may see I take no idle liberty, let me explain my motives." The speaker hesitated, and with difficulty added: "I believe that my person is known to you."

"Undoubtedly," returned Napoleon, who had the faculty of remembering all whom he had once seen; "you are the betrothed bride of the Duke D'Enghien."

"If, then, you know of my engagement, you will at once acknowledge strong cause for my interest in his welfare. There was a time when I should have shrunk as from death from such an avowal; but now I hesitate not to own my love for him. It is this which has brought me alone to your camp; there is no earthly sacrifice from which I would now shrink, if I might only—"

A quick and restless motion of the man whom she confronted followed this appeal, made the more touching by its incompletion; and she looked into his face as if to gather some sign of mercy. Certain it is she was understood.

Rigid as ever were those features; and yet she was speaking to one who held in his hands the destiny of her lover!—whose one word could restore him from the gloom of a prison to the liberty of life!

"The Duke D'Enghien," replied Napoleon, "is my prisoner, under charge of the heavy crime of treason. He has incurred its penalty, by acting as spy of the enemies of France."

This was not without its effect upon the listener. "Believe me," she exclaimed, "this charge is false! Could I forget my position and my sex for one so unworthy of his country's regard? But even if he has erred, give him the advantage of a fair trial." She paused, breathless and agitated.

Napoleon's eye rested with a gentler expression upon her glowing face. "The Duke d'Enghien," he replied, "ought indeed to value an affection which can dare all things; but I cannot allow it to interfere with my duty to my country."

His manner alarmed the lady, for his face wore the expression of one who is conscious of the possession of a secret, the knowledge of which is to produce the most painful emotions. Notwithstanding the calm resolution she had displayed in the foregoing scene, she grew paler as she whispered, with an earnestness that rendered the soft tones of her voice doubly impressive, "I have come here to learn the truth, General Bonaparte; and it would be cruel in you to conceal your intentions."

Napoleon gazed for the first time directly on the feminine loveliness of the beautiful creature before him, and at the suspended animation on her countenance; but the beholding her had no influence to turn him from his firm purpose, for he said, coldly: "I shall not conceal anything. I will further allow that you possess the fullest right to

learn everything connected with one so nearly related. His is no ordinary crime, mademoiselle; and it becomes my painful duty—" He paused.

"Proceed!" cried the excited girl, nearly ceasing to breathe in the intensity of her interest. A face colourless with dread, set in startling contrast the lines of sternness on the face of Napoleon, who, without trusting himself to any utterance, drew forth the death-warrant, and placed it in her hands. She took it with a sort of charmed submission; but the instant her eye fell on the engrossing formulary words, an absorbing curiosity concentrated every feeling. The document was concise, and its abrupt style would have sufficiently identified the writer. The reader read the roll a second time, from the first to the last letter, before it produced any clear impression on her mind. She could not bring home to herself the possibility that her lover was immediately to be consigned to death. There must be some mistake, she thought; it could not be that he to whom she had united every thought of earthly happiness was thus to die. This was truly a happy doubt, but for which the shock of that sudden blow might have proved fatal. When she had a third time read the scroll, her looks turned eagerly to her companion, anxious to detect signs of mercy—of hope in his countenance. But Napoleon's intention was too plain to be long misunderstood; and when by degrees this painful dream became a conviction, her whole frame seemed giving way. The evidence of her lover's doom held back her thoughts, even from heavenly consolation. Yet she continued in full consciousness; the very imminence of the danger endued her with strength to em-

brace it in its most disheartening aspects; and as she closed her eyes, and leaned back, wearily, in the chair, she tried to collect some sustaining consideration that yet might fortify her from despair: but no; her lover's death appeared inevitable.

As Napoleon stood watching her in silence, she suddenly raised herself from her posture of grief, and her eyes shone with a wild meaning, as they became riveted on his own. For one moment she pressed her hands to the throbbing balls, and then in a voice so low that her lips scarcely moved with the utterance, she whispered, "General Bonaparte, you have doomed an innocent man to die—to die without guilt. The eye of the Almighty reads your spirit while I speak; and at the solemn hour when eternity opens to you, you will remember the words of one whose heart you have broken!—Yes," she added, with a look of touching anguish, "you have destroyed my last hope! and yet—oh! what is this strange impulse of prophecy!—an inward voice whispers to me that, as surely as I shall see perish from before my eyes all I love on earth, for want of a fellow-being's mercy, so will it be with you!"

The speaker paused; her feelings, excited as they were, could sustain her physical frame no longer; and before Napoleon could have made reply, she became insensible. On recovery from her swoon she was seated in a chair, her dress damp with the water that had been sprinkled in her face; and in that moment of illusion she fondly trusted that the impression on her mind had been all a dream. The sight of Napoleon, who still supported her, dispelled the fancy; and instantly withdrawing herself from

his encircling arms, she walked to the door, descended the solitary stairway, and recrossed the threshold.

The sentinels dropped their arms as this unknown visitant passed out, and interchanged expressive glances, as if seeking in the countenances of each other some solution of the interview. Several officers, with an air of the deepest respect, passed forward to accompany the mysterious intruder to the extremity of the camp.

Napoleon, after her abrupt and sudden departure, turned with a look of chagrin towards the yet unsigned death-warrant, and again his gaze recoiled quickly, with the air of one not sufficiently at ease to feel any desire for repose. For an hour he did no more than watch the motions of his time-piece—motions that increased, in place of lessening, his own impatience. Once more he sought employment for his mind in looking on the lifeless moon—pale and sorrowful as the face he had just seen,—moving in the tranquil heavens without voice or sound, without any cadence to soothe his troubled spirit. As he pursued the current of his thoughts, he became himself appalled at his meditated purpose, and a virtuous indignation was about frustrating the intention, when his ambition once more sprung up to cancel the resolution. The baffled master of armies took up the fatal document for the third time—reperused it this time with less reflection. Seizing his pen, and thrusting open the recoiling parchment, he wrote—*Napoleon*—and all was over! All over? nay, not so! The cloud of doom rose in that moment unperceived, and began to overshadow him. He felt, scarce knowing it, a sad regret at the quick departure of the midnight visiter, who, at the

eleventh hour, had preached to him repentance. What if the prophecy should be fulfilled! the prophecy of his fall from that towering height, to which arms and menaces were pledged to raise him? It was a solemn and a gloomy thought.

* * * * * *

The last shades of night were fleeing, when orders were issued to the army to put itself again in motion. As the soldiers sprang from their brief rest, and cast looks towards the scene of their late warfare, they uttered the most extravagant expressions of delight. The very horrors of that warfare had made every heart more sensible to the quiet loveliness of nature, exhibiting—how truly—that the fiercest passions cannot entirely efface the heart's tenderest sentiments. Gigantic forests, fertile valleys, and gushing streamlets were lit up by the rising sun; a warm southern wind blew sweetly over, and the sky above bore only those light fleecy clouds that sweep in the higher altitudes. Though the eventful night was long since over, and, in the memory of the roving legions, was no more than a grateful recollection, the dark act, which ere this had consigned a living being to the grave, still darkened one spirit with an aspect of malignity. The bugle sounded shrill and clear, inspiring a spirit of exultation in every soldier's breast; but without the camp, far away, was one who could never hope again.

An hour after the orders had been given, every piece of artillery, every baggage-wagon, was in motion. The straggling houses on the slope, and the hamlets that dotted the vast surrounding plains, were once more left to their

old sweet quiet, and the reassured villagers, now creeping from their hiding-places, felt the joy of the condemned on receiving a sudden reprieve.

During the march now commenced, the officers of Napoleon made various attempts to introduce to his attention the subject of the last night's adventure, little deeming how gladly he would have forgotten it. A severe reproof was the only answer condescended to these vain endeavours, so that all expressions of curiosity were very readily suppressed, under fear of exciting his displeasure.

CHAPTER II.

——"What is't that takes from thee
Thy comfort, pleasure, and thy golden sleep?
Why dost thou bend thine eyes upon the earth,
And start so often when thou sitt'st alone?
Why hast thou lost the fresh blood in thy cheek?
Oh! what portents are these?"

Two months had elapsed from the period in which the incidents recorded in the last chapter transpired—two weary months, replete with events that concerned all Europe, and which were made especially famous by the incessant marches of the French armies. Presently through all Europe, and along the peopled borders of Asia, flew the tidings that Napoleon, the Lieutenant, the General, the Consul, was to receive as his gift the crown of France. Yet so great had been the slaughter, so many the hearths still endangered or already bereft, as seriously to check that hilarity which a triumph scarce ever fails to excite in a victorious nation. Through blood Napoleon had marched onward to the goal of his ambition; fortress after fortress had yielded to the, as yet, invincible hero, and a continent was already peopled by his subjects.

No distress, personal or national, could gainsay such success. The evening of the 2d of December found Napoleon Emperor of France. In spite of the distresses of war, the common people had by this time been in a great measure restored to former comfort; and, sharing in one

common and united hope, they enjoyed heartily the day of pomp which obliterated the title of First Consul, the like of which day had not been witnessed since the time of Charlemagne. Every public place was crowded with the gay Parisians, while shouts of *Vive Napoleon!* in every direction rent the air. From the suburbs of Paris to the waters of the Seine, snatches of popular songs were constantly mingling in the shouts of the gay revellers. But not alone for Paris was this time eventful; the country from every nook poured in her artisans and labourers, to pay homage to the meteor which blazed so brightly. Yes! the lofty pinnacle was completely won. That day witnessed ambassadors from every city in Europe, bearing tokens of favour and distinction. Love of glory and thirst of power were together satisfied.

As night drew on, the interior of the palace of the Tuileries became illumined with a splendour which made every stone of that magnificent and ancient pile, and every slate of the high slanting roof, clear to the shining multitudes who thronged the gardens round.* In their midst, breast-high in foliage, and canopied by rustling boughs, rose the white marble forms that Italy had loved; while towards the Elysian Fields, the bright watery columns of a fountain sustained themselves almost as tranquilly. Officers, in the dress of their profession, loitered at the doors

* The Tuileries, in Paris, fronts the river Seine, having four great pavilions with pillars, and a fifth pavilion covered with a dome, under which is the great hall and staircase which leads to the upper apartments. It was built by Louis XIV., having on one side beautiful gardens, ornamented with statuary from Italy.—*History of France.*

of that sumptuous edifice, as if unwilling to leave a scene of so much splendour, thus heightening its magnificence. Beneath the central arch, and at the foot of the grand staircase leading to the reception rooms, stern sentinels were stationed; these, however, challenged none. So there went up whoever listed:—the young to see something new —the old to revive their faded dreams of royalty;—both alike feverish with an undefined expectancy. It seemed as though all the world that night would welcome its oppressor.

Surrounded by his brave marshals—a chief amidst chiefs—Napoleon suffered group after group to gather before him, reading by short and piercing glances the character of each individual, and with a wonderful aptitude suiting his words to the capacities of whomsoever he addressed. Early in the evening, he withdrew; yet not till a triumphant shout had risen from the dense mass that still heaved, billow-like, without—a shout taken up and repeated, over and over by thousands yet beyond.

Napoleon, unfatigued, but satiated with the glories of the day, repaired at an early hour to his own room: not, however, to rest; when midnight came, he was still sitting pensive and alone. He noted not that the extravagant illumination was fading away—that activity and merriment were being changed to silence and forgetfulness.

The room he occupied was furnished in a style that, if not suitable to a soldier, or remarkably adapted for the President of a republic, was at least worthy of an Emperor. To look on Napoleon himself, his visage was strikingly altered since the midnight interview with the betrothed of his murdered victim; the lines about his mouth

were darker and firmer, and constant exposure to unkindly climates had darkened his complexion. His pallid features told not only of months of hardship, but nights of wakefulness. The proportions of his frame, too, were enlarged. These outward changes had been observed by the least observing; but even the most shrewd could have detected more than one particular cause—incessant labours and watching—for so striking and so swift a change. But up to this moment self-consciousness, as a smouldering fire, had been withering up his joy, almost without detection. It now put forth its power with a strength that foreboded only evil. The last visit of man's guardian angel is ever propitious; and the posthumous journals of Napoleon discover the fact that recollections which had lain torpid under the excitement of successive triumphs, now sprung up within him with severe fidelity. Each particular event in his distinguished life seemed, with wonderful distinctness, to stride forward into the present. The studies of his restless youth—the dawn of his reputation—his rapid and flattering success—his present elevation;—all these marshalled themselves in rapid survey, and obliterated that one great avenging form. With his rise had commenced a new era; an era when eminence was to be won by merit—so dreamed he—and valour have its full reward. It was not long that his thoughts could thus intervene with his convictions; but still the panorama of life continued to unwind.

He remembered, as it were but yesterday, the joyous season of his youth, the fostering hands which caressed him, the nursery on the floor of which he had once so demurely played. Again he sat within the charmed circle

of youthful hearts, and heard merry voices and noisy laughter, or stood hand in hand with loved companions. His mother, too, whom, if he had not followed in obedience, he never failed to reverence as a saint, appeared to rise out of the grave, like one who had not seen corruption, and to pass before him in all the beauty and sanctity of love. The innocent passion, the guileless serenity of those days seemed revived. Prattling voices, and the voices of the wind, the savour of green fields and the fragrance of fresh flowers, came over him—and then *suddenly* the whole scene died off; and wretchedness—banishment from the Paradise—was in their stead.

What, after all, had power and fame brought him? Nothing but inquietude; inquietude because of committed crime and departed joy.

In bitterness of heart the Emperor started up and paced the room with hurried steps; as he did this, the very atmosphere seemed to teem with unnatural life. A mist came gradually up, and a thousand living shapes were in it. He saw forms and faces that he knew were hid long ago amidst the dead, and heard the moans of the dying and the supplications of the lost. His eye wandered round with a vague gaze, as if following some imaginary form. Amidst those dreadful gazers was the noble victim to his late revenge—the Duke D'Enghien—in the pangs of dissolution. In vain he willed the apparition to be gone: there it was, and would abide—its sad, reproachful look growing more reproachful still!

Napoleon now resorted to the excitement of stimulants to support his spirits. Approaching a side-table, he

filled a goblet with the sparkling fluid, and swallowed its contents. When in the act of replacing the glass a distant clock tolled out with a piercing distinctness the hour of ONE. The tones, aided by the lateness of the night, fell mournfully upon his ear, and as the echo of the last tone ceased, he started, hearing a footstep on the stairs. To his surprise the steps neared his own door; and notwithstanding his courage was as great as any living man's, his heart throbbed violently. A moment after, one of his body-guards stepped in. The entire expression of his countenance underwent an instant change, and he completely recovered the stern manner so habitual to him,—a manner to which may perhaps be ascribed no small part of the influence he exercised at will over inferior minds.

The man handed to Napoleon a note from the court physician. Napoleon snapped the seal asunder, and read as follows:

"SIRE:

"I have been called to attend a lady of distinction, who suffers from a lingering illness that must very soon prove fatal. It is her request that your Majesty come to her immediately after this intimation is received.

"MONTESQUIEU."

Napoleon ordered out his carriage, and a few minutes afterwards he descended the grand stairway, on the steps of which lay scattered a few sleepy guards. The coachman-in-waiting had already received his directions, and as quickly as Napoleon entered, drove towards the "Pont

Royal," and thence along the broad road that runs parallel with the Seine.

There was that in the appearance of the night—the plunging of the moon amidst sombre clouds, the plash of the water of that shallow and untranquil river, and in the fresh breathings of the air destined to feed the life of the morrow, that was grateful to his feelings. Nature is ever refreshful after being shut out from the heart, and her voice is ten thousand times sweeter to the wearied mind than the attuned symphonies of the most gifted of minstrels, charm they never so wisely.

Napoleon, nevertheless, could not avoid dwelling on the singular message he had received, or prevent a wish that the mystery might soon be unravelled. He was, nevertheless, able to trace by his eagle glance some connexion between his recent feelings and the object of his present visit. What this distinctly was, he knew not. His surmises, however, brought no satisfactory conclusion. Suddenly his carriage rolled beneath a massive arch, and a side-door opened on the lighted interior of a mansion, the outward appearance of which was one of age and gloom. Napoleon, as he set his feet on the steep and narrow steps, felt for the first time a surprise at the alacrity and readiness with which he had obeyed the summons. Still, he had no misgivings, and passed in. Without making or receiving an inquiry, he was ushered through a long, narrow hall, and up a flight of stairs. "I may advance no farther," said the domestic, pointing expressively to a chamber door. Napoleon, at the page's pause, which he hardly heeded, imagined that he heard the suppressed

sounds which usually precede a visit of death to the chambers of the sick; and so softly did he step, and unclose the door pointed out to him, as to enter without apparent notice.

The scene that presented itself was a strange one, and to his mind—not yet relieved from the active terrors of the imagination—an awfully impressive one. On a bed, propped up by cushions, lay the emaciated figure of a young female. Her eyes and folded hands were raised towards heaven, with a look of resignation. By her side knelt the mother, who had found strength to minister to her child's last moments. On the opposite side sat her father, his tearless eyes betraying the force of the mental suffering he was struggling to conceal. A group thus mournfully occupied, and with feelings so much engrossed, the entrance was unlikely to disturb. The Emperor, almost shrouded in the gloom of curtains, advanced to the bedside. The very first glance was enough to show him that in the midst of suffering and death he saw Florence de Rohan, the betrothed of the Duke D'Enghien, from whom he had last parted in the pride of health. There was a fearful history in those sunken temples and wasted features—a change which told Napoleon, in startling accents, what mental suffering had been compressed into that interval of time. He stood with arms folded across his breast, and gazed upon the wreck before him. No tone of music, no haunting air, ever recalled such a host of piercing memories as the altered face of that dying girl. The heartrending appeal on that eventful night—his signing of the death-warrant, and her words at parting—words so fearfully prophetic—

all these were traced anew with indescribable rapidity on his mind.

The hollow eyes of the invalid at length unclosed, and, strange to say, lighted up with a ray of joy as they rested upon the Emperor. This smile might be compared to that which illumines the ocean in the pauses of its storms: a smile sad and unattractive in its sweetness. Presently the low voice of Florence was heard, and Napoleon bent forward, holding his breath to listen.

"Pardon me, sire! if on the verge of the grave I have so far forgotten the prerogatives of royalty as to sink for a moment the subject in the Emperor. It needs not," she continued, "that I repeat to you what I have suffered since our interview, for I will soon be in a land where the weary are at rest."

This gentle but all-powerful address, from one so frail and yet so resigned, served as a crowning stroke to the remorseful feelings of Napoleon, whose sinking head and continued silence told the marvellous working at his heart. He closed his eyes, and yet beheld her as he last had seen her. The sufferer's face was suffused with a more life-like tint as she witnessed Napoleon's relenting manner, and she spoke again with a sudden strength that apparently contradicted the professional knowledge of her medical attendant: "No longer grieve," she said, as her tears fell softly upon Napoleon's hand; "it is the living, not the dead who need our grief and ask for sympathy. Support from above has enabled me to meet death with composure; and before I depart from earth, *receive my forgiveness*. I shall not have lived in vain, if you bear this lesson of ambition's

doings to your royal home. It may serve, perhaps, to curb your schemings for the future, and to instruct you that conscience is ever true to her trust. Remorse must visit the heart which yields itself to unrighteous dictates. Nothing now remains for me but to die," added Florence, and in a voice so low as scarcely to be heard.

As she paused, and leant back childlike on her mother's bosom, a faint but beautiful smile—the smile seldom seen but on the faces of the dead—rested on her features, as though of satisfaction with this interview with her destroyer. Her respiration grew fainter and fainter, and her visiter felt the damp, chill hand relax its hold. Silently turning away his face, Napoleon laid his hand upon his heart, and left the room.

We have seen how futile was the supplicating anguish of Florence de Rohan on that eventful night, so replete with melancholy incident, when her devoted affection drove her to the French camp on a vain errand of mercy. From the moment she left Napoleon, her manner had been strangely in contrast with the excitement which had previously distinguished it. She had accompanied her attendant, on leaving his presence, almost without consciousness; but from the moment that she reached her own home, amidst its many comforts and its many solaces, she pined rapidly away, like a phantom, disappearing without whisper of complaint. Yet over her death-bed hovered a glorious and assured hope—the hope of being united to that one mind and spirit that had animated for her every earthly prospect.

It was amidst the festivities that filled up the week

of Napoleon's coronation, that the ancient vault of the De Rohan family, situate in the cemetery of "Père la Chaise," was opened, and that from one of the most magnificent mansions in Paris issued a coffin. This was laid upon a plumed hearse, and preceded by a long train of carriages, amidst the emblazoned arms of which could be distinguished those of the French Emperor. Various causes were assigned to account for its presence at the interment of a member of the house of Bourbon; the most general conjecture being, that he had overlooked political animosities in his desire to do honour to so much loveliness and goodness.

It remains but to be added, that the death-bed scene, with whatever had concerned it, never passed from the memory of the Emperor; that by his private confessions, recently disclosed, it served to cloud his most glorious prospects of ambition, and to stir a baneful poison with every political triumph; and when all his brilliant achievements came to nought—himself a prisoner, restlessly pacing the barren summits of St. Helena—it dwelt with the gloom of all his terrible remembrances. Not for any mortal pen is given the task to recount its still torturing signs in the hour of death, or for any mortal mind to anticipate in its full reality the tribunal at which every secret work will be revealed.

"Days are gone, by many a token
Long foretold, but slighted yet;
Now the seventh last seal is broken,
And the sun in blood hath set."

While from the eye of the reader all record of this story fades away, may not his heart treasure up its simple

lesson—a lesson to warn us that human happiness comes neither from splendid talents, nor brilliant achievements; that intellect, however exalted, unless sanctified by pure and lofty purposes, does little more than prepare for its possessor a wretched fate.

With every right judgment of events, the mind improves; and it is something to become free from those prejudices which have warped at times the best balanced minds, when such have had occasion to pass judgment on the prominent names delivered up by history from her great treasury of wrecks. Through the same gate, the gate whose portals stand by the grave of all things earthly, have gone the victor and his victims. The gates again close, and we see nothing, hear nothing. On the bright pathway illumined by the flames of vast cities, and the burning torches of unnumbered soldiery, darkness closes, and night is come. Oh! if we would pierce that heavy veil, let us image in the sky of celestial azure a martyr's bright crown—a reunion of those whom mortal love was fit to gladden, but who, called hence, find themselves thrice and inseparably blessed. The love of Heaven, continuous and unalloyed, is the oil which hope pours on the flickering flame that glimmers amidst this low terrestrial air—faith pointing to the time when all the lamps of God's kindling shall be lifted up beyond the firmament of stars, and hung amidst the changeless beauty of the heaven of heavens.

THE LADY OF THE ROCK.

The Lady of the Rock.*

A LEGEND OF NEW ENGLAND.

CHAPTER I.

"Splendour in heaven, and horror on the main,
Sunshine and storm at once—a troubled day."

DRAMATIC POEM.

ALL readers of English history must be able to recall to mind with especial distinctness that period in its annals when the unfortunate Charles I. drew upon himself the odium and mistrust of Parliament, and London witnessed the unprecedented scene of the trial of a king for treason before a court chosen from amongst his subjects. It will be recollected that opposing religious interests operated

* As the above story is not mere fiction, it is scarcely necessary to remind the reader that its groundwork has been sought elsewhere than in the writer's fancy. The *main plot* of the legendary portion is taken from "Maltby's Tales of the Puritans," but for the incidents and language the writer claims entire originality. As many minds have been allured by the stormy grandeur of the fate of the regicides, it is not surprising that several persons have attempted partially to depict it. It will be seen that the authoress has sought to blend with the sterner features of her story, those more delicate shades of feeling and sentiment, which no crime and no misfortune can prevent from mingling with human lot.

with those of a merely political nature in leading many of the enemies of Charles to push their aversion to his measures to this extreme. His unwise prohibition of the Puritan emigration to the American colonies was not the least of these creating causes; and might be cited by such as are fond of tracing retributive justice in human affairs, as one of those instances in which men are permitted by their frowardness to pass upon themselves the sentence of their own destruction, since, but for that prohibition, the most powerful opponent of Charles, and the mighty instrument of his ruin, would have embarked for New England, and this country have become the theatre of Cromwell's actions and renown—supposing that the elements of that remarkable character must have won elsewhere something of the same name he has left behind him,—a name to live alike in the condemnation and commendation of mankind.

To the period alluded the beginning of this tale reverts. The trial of the king had been in progress several days. Of more than an hundred and thirty judges appointed by the Commons, about seventy sat in constant attendance. Chief in rank and importance among these was General Lisle—a man whom we should not confound either with the mad enthusiasts of that day, or with those dissembling hypocrites who used their religion only as a stepping-stone to power, or the cloak to conceal a guilty and treasonable ambition, since his opposition to Charles was actuated solely by the purest principles of patriotism and religion. He was, at the time of the trial, in his sixtieth year; and his constant attendance and unwavering firm-

ness of purpose—the evident results of preconceived principle—during the whole sitting of that strange tribunal, were not without great effect in nerving to continued resolution the otherwise faltering minds of many of the younger judges. For it cannot be doubted that compunctious feelings must have had moments of ascendency in the hearts of a number of those with whom rested the event of this questionable trial. This was evinced in some by their occasional absence; in others, who nevertheless felt scrupulously bound to be present, by a nervous tremor at the appearance of the prisoner, and subsequent abstraction of attention from the scene, as testifying a desire to assume as small a share as possible of the deep responsibility belonging to the occasion.

Of the latter class was William Heath, the son of a Puritan divine in Sussex. At the opening of the war, he had repaired to the army, and risen by his gallantry and merits to the rank of general. Though still young he had been afterward conspicuous in Parliament, and was one of those who took up accusations against the eleven members. Yet although he was friendly to the king's deposition, he had at first positively refused to sit when appointed one of a Court called to make inquisition for his blood. And he had at length only consented to assume the place assigned him there, as it was notoriously believed, through the influence of Lisle, to whose daughter he was betrothed, and his nuptials with whom were to be completed on the night on which this narrative opens.

His handsome countenance, as he sat in the Court through the whole day preceding—though it contrasted

with the pallor which had marked it during those previous, in wearing upon it the anxious flush of the expectant bridegroom,—yet bore the same harassed air which had been seen upon it since the commencement of the trial, and which even the blissful hopes he was about to realize could not suffice to dissipate. It was only when he turned his eyes upon Lisle, unflinching in his dignified composure, that he seemed momentarily able to yield himself up to the unalloyed anticipation of happiness. So true is it, that a conscience ill at ease with itself has the power to mar the bliss of heaven.

The Court had adjourned; the prisoner had been remanded to the care of Lisle, in whose house he had been kept in strict and harsh confinement ever since his landing in London, during those hours not occupied with his trial; and but one more day remained to decide the doom of the unhappy Charles Stuart.

It was eight o'clock in the evening. In an apartment, far remote from that chamber of Lisle's spacious but sombre-looking dwelling, which held the person of the royal prisoner, were assembled the wedding guests. As much festivity and ornament had been called to grace the occasion as was consistent with Lisle's Puritanic views, yet the whole seemed by far too little to celebrate the marriage of the lovely divinity for whom it was prepared. The apartment was in the Elizabethan style of architecture, but devoid of those ornaments of luxurious taste, which, in the reign of Charles I., graced the houses of the opulent and distinguished of the Church of England. A quaint stiffness reigned throughout the furniture and other

arrangements. Rows of high-backed chairs, interrupted here and there with a book-case, table, or other heavy piece of mahogany, stood in prim regularity against the wall; tall candlesticks, containing taller candles, cast their blue light from the mantel-piece, and a large Bible, laid open upon the table, was calculated to infuse devotional or religious sentiments into those mirthful feelings belonging to the occasion. No branches of mistletoe or holly hung around the room remained as suggestions of the recent Christmas; no superb and glittering chandelier shed its soft flood of light upon the assembly; no damask drapery or luxurious sofas gave an air of elegance and comfort to the spacious dreariness of the apartment; no music was prepared for the enlivenment of the evening; nor were any profane amusements that night to invoke the judgments of Heaven upon the approaching ceremony.

The company consisted of more than two hundred guests, gentlemen and ladies, all staunch Puritans, and opposers of the king. The countenances of many of the male portion of these were recognisable as the same which had, for the last few days, appeared as the arraigners at the trial so speedily about to be terminated, and a certain peculiar expression, common to each, betokening a mind preoccupied by one deeply engrossing topic, might have enabled an uninformed observer readily to select them from the rest. Yet there were others present to whom the affair alluded to was not less momentous, and with whom rested fully as much of the responsibility of its now almost certainly dark result.

One of these latter, conspicuously seated near to Lisle,

was the mighty mover of the political revolution of the day, and the chief instrument in procuring the king's unhappy position—the aspiring, though still religious Cromwell. The descriptions of history have made the personal appearance of this remarkable man so familiar to posterity, that it is superfluous here to draw any picture of his coarse and strongly-made form, and severely harsh, but thoughtful features. The mention of his name will at once call up to the minds of such as have ever interested themselves in the account of those stirring times,—which have left their impress upon subsequent events, and one of whose later results may be traced in our own national freedom,—no vague or shadowy embodiment, but a well-defined portrait, engraved on the tablet of memory.

On this evening, his furtive glance around him from beneath his shaggy eyebrows, as he conversed with Lisle in a labyrinthine manner peculiar to him at times, evinced a wish to penetrate into the secrets of such hearts as rated his character at its true value. A close observer might have noted, too, that ever and anon as that glance, after wandering to distant parts of the room, returned and fixed upon Lisle, it gradually fell, as if stricken to earth by the steady gaze of the truly disinterested religionist, and the rebukes of its owner's accusing conscience.

"The Court, thou sayest," ran his speech, "have this day considered and agreed upon a judgment. It is well. But I tell thee that not Parliament, nor the army, nor this Court, could avail to pull down Charles Stuart from his high place, saving that the God of Heaven is at war with him. What though there be witnesses to prove that he set

up his standard at Nottingham, led his armed troops at Newbury, Edgehill and Naseby—issued proclamations and mandates for the prosecution of the war? They are but instruments in the hands of the same God who destroyed and dethroned Belshazzar of old, because he was weighed in the balance and found wanting. And is it not meet that we Christians should buckle on our armour in behalf of the Lord of Hosts? Yea, verily! else for mine own part, Charles Stuart should not fall from the throne of England. I am not a bloody man; nay, by reason of human frailty, my heart had now well-nigh failed me in this very cause, but that he who putteth his hand to the plough in these troublous times, and looketh back, need be careful that he be not hanged upon the gallows which Haman prepared for Mordecai."

The whole of this last sentence was spoken in soliloquy, for Lisle had at that moment risen to receive some guests.

The persons entering were three in number,—a gentleman of about forty years of age, attended by two lovely females, whose youthful years and striking resemblance to himself, would instantly have suggested, what was in reality the case, that they were his daughters.

From the looks of interest with which his arrival was regarded by all present, it was evident that he was a person of some distinction, though he had not, at that period, given to the world the monument of his genius on which he has since built his immortality. Yet John Milton was justly celebrated even then for his political writings, his strenuous assertion and defence of liberty, his austere Puritanic views, and his abstemious manner of life. His

whole appearance was prepossessing in the extreme, but rather interesting than commanding; for his stature was low, though his body was strongly made and muscular. His hair, which was of light brown, streaked with hues of gold, and hanging in silken waves to his shoulders, was parted in the middle, after the fashion of the day, and surmounted a low yet expansive forehead, sufficiently indicative of the depth of genius which lay beneath. His complexion was fair, and delicately coloured as a woman's; and the contour of his features might have been objected to as effeminate, were it not for the expression of manly dignity which animated the whole countenance. His full, gray eye, in its somewhat sleepy expression, evinced that quiet melancholy peculiar to poetic genius, while a certain searching and wandering look with which he occasionally stared fixedly around him, suggested the idea that his sight was not perfect.

The two daughters of Milton, by whom he was attended, were highly interesting in appearance, with the dignity of countenance peculiar to their father, and having upon them the unmistakeable stamp of an inheritance from him of nature's noblest gift of intellect.

Returning Lisle's salutation as he approached to meet them, these two young females retired to a seat amongst the ladies, and left Milton and his host standing near the entrance of the apartment.

"Thou losest thy daughter to-night, honoured friend," said the former. "I trust she may find a continuance of that happiness in wedlock that she has enjoyed in her father's house."

"True happiness belongs not to this earth," said Lisle. "It is in mercy withheld from us by the Almighty, that we may be the more ready to meet death when the summons calls us hence."

"Thou speakest well," replied Milton; "the very impossibility of finding happiness here is a merciful provision of the all-wise Creator. But talking of a willingness to encounter death, they tell me that the Court have decided upon the sentence of the tyrant and traitor king. Is the rumour correct?"

"So much so," said Lisle, "that to-morrow we sign the warrant for his execution."

"I shall marvel," said the other, "though I speak it with shame, if fifty out of your hundred have the Christian courage to stain their fingers with the touch of the bloody quill prepared for them."

"May all such then," returned Lisle, while a flush as of indignation passed over his countenance for an instant, and then died rapidly away—"may all such as flinch from the performance of this noble act of duty to their country and to God, and omit to place their names, when called upon, to that righteous document of His preparing, not find at the last judgment that the angel of the Lord has likewise omitted to place their names upon his book. But here is my daughter and her future husband; and the man of God has risen to perform the marriage ceremony. Excuse me, I must meet them at the door."

"I pray thee give me thy hand first, and conduct me to a seat. A strange mistiness which I have of late had to come frequently across my eyes, is upon them now, and every object before me seems indistinct and confused."

Lisle hastily did as his friend desired, scarcely hearing or heeding, in his hurry, the import of his words, and then advancing to meet his daughter and Heath, he conducted them toward the venerable minister of their faith, in waiting to unite the young couple in the bonds of holy wedlock.

As they took their station before him, his pious "Let us pray," was heard, and all present arose. After a long and fervent supplication, in the manner of the Puritan divines of that period, he delivered a sort of homily upon the duties and responsibilities of the marriage state, and then pronounced an extemporaneous and brief ceremony, ending with the words, "What God hath joined together, let no man put asunder." This was followed by another lengthy prayer, and William Heath and Alice Lisle were husband and wife.

The company now advanced to greet the bride and groom, who separately returned their salutations with a polished grace appropriate to their differing sex.

Unscreened by the customary bridal veil, as savouring too much of a form belonging to the established church, the lovely face of Alice was not covered, save that a few natural ringlets, purposely left unfastened, fell upon her cheeks, and partially screened from observation her exquisitely beautiful features. Her dress was of the simplest and purest white, and without ornament or addition to enhance her natural loveliness; and it is impossible to conceive of a being more charming than she appeared in the modest diffidence of her sex on the most important and conspicuous occasion of a woman's life, and yet withal

losing nothing of the dignity of manner belonging to one conscious of possessing that energy of mind, which, so far from being, as some erroneously suppose, a masculine or unwomanly trait, is, on the contrary, the distinguishing and crowning mark of a character essentially feminine. What but such strength of mind has ever yet triumphed over female vanity and love of display, and from the exacting divinity of man's homage, converted a woman into the self-sacrificing and judicious minister to his happiness, fitted her to be true to one with untiring devotion through evil report and good report, rejoicing with him not for her sake, but for his, in his prosperity; sharing with him uncomplainingly his adversity, and cheering, with words of comfort, while her own heart may have been well-nigh breaking, the path in which, but for her example to shame him, and her voice to comfort and encourage him, he would have sunk to rise no more.

Well was it for William Heath that Alice Lisle possessed these requisites for becoming such an unwavering and devoted companion in misfortune, as we have described; for the day, though not immediately near, was still in store, when her willingness to encounter adversity, and her fitness to meet it with fortitude sufficient to sustain herself, her father, and the husband to whom she had that night given her hand, and had long since pledged the full affections of her heart, were amply to be tested.

The appearance of Heath was such as was well calculated to excite interest, and his mind, character, and winning manners, such as speedily to change this on the appearance of any preference on his part, into sentiments

of a more tender character. There was something in his whole mien—in the easy and upright carriage of his head —the intrepid character of his features—the bold and vigorous flashing of his dark eyes—that marked him no common man.

The salutations were soon ended, and the company now being somewhat relieved from the awkward embarrassment which they had experienced while waiting for the appearance of those whom the occasion was to honour—for, in those days, society was much the same in that respect as at present,—the company scattered, and gathered together in knots and groups, and discussed with great eagerness the engrossing topic of the trial. Conversation, however, flowed, not as it was wont, in its pleasant current, diverging here and there, as fancy or caprice suggested, but an appearance of gloom pervaded the whole intercourse; and although each individual appeared evidently to make an effort to relieve this feeling, the effort itself showed a consciousness of the constraint.

It was not then the custom to deprive the groom and bride of each other's society during the whole evening after the ceremony, but was rather the fashion to throw them together as much as possible—which must at least, in the case of all love-matches, have been more conformable with the inclinations, than that habit of scrupulously avoiding one another now in vogue. Agreeably with this ordinary arrangement, Alice and Heath withdrew toward the close of the evening, without attracting observation, into an ante-room adjoining the main apartment.

It had not escaped the notice of any, that notwith-

standing the blissful occasion, the brow of Alice wore a cloud, if not actually of sorrow, at least of melancholy sadness. We may believe that this had attracted the especial notice of him who had that evening taken her happiness into his proper keeping; but his sympathetic heart rightly surmised its cause.

"Thou art sad, my own Alice," he said, "on this night, which I had fondly hoped would have made thee as supremely joyful as it does myself. You distress yourself on account of the king's situation: is it not so?"

"Not only on account of the king's unhappy situation, but likewise because of the hand my father and thyself have had in it. I fear that his blood, if he be sentenced, as the rumour is, to-morrow, will be avenged upon the heads of those whom I love best on earth."

"But, Alice," argued the husband, "he has merited, by his tyranny and treason, this trial, and in contemning the Court, as he has done throughout in refusing to plead, he will likewise merit whatever sentence it may see fit, after examining the competent witnesses, to pass upon him. Besides, has not your father told you that this is the Lord's cause, and that He calleth aloud from the throne of Heaven for the blood of Charles Stuart."

"Those are indeed my father's words," replied Alice, "*too severe* in his religious views, and forgetting that the Almighty is a God of mercy no less than of justice. But, William Heath, they are not the words dictated by the generous and kind heart that animates thy bosom, else Alice Lisle, though she be her father's daughter, had not this night become thy wife. Listen to the conscience which

the penetrating eye of true affection seeth even now reproving thee, and have no further hand in this bloody work. Charles Stuart may be all that the Parliament and your Court have named him;—and if he be, God forbid that I should justify his baseness;—but as we are all prone to err, it is sweet to forgive, even as we hope to be forgiven. Go not to the Court to-morrow, William, nor stain this hand of thine by affixing thy signature to the death-warrant of the king. Promise me this; I ask it as my wedding boon."

"Would that you had spared me, beloved one, the pain of hearing you ask aught that I cannot and dare not grant. My word of honour to your father is pledged to perform the very act which you implore me to leave undone. It was the condition which sealed my happiness in calling you wife this night. When I would have shrunk from the responsibility of taking an active part in the trial, and resigned my place to an older and more experienced statesman than myself, Henry Lisle, in disgust at what he conceived the indecision and irreligion of my character, would have robbed me of that dear hope which has even now been realized. I was forced to promise your father, Alice, that I would not only accept my place as one of the judges, but that I would be present throughout the trial, and shrink from no act which my position as a member of the Court imposed on me—even to the signing of the warrant for Charles Stuart's death. Is there naught else, involving less than my honour, that you would have me grant you? If there is, ask it, sweet one, and I will move heaven and earth to accomplish it."

"These are idle words of gallantry, William, unworthy the confidence which should exist between us. A wife need have no boon to ask of her husband unless in a case which involves his own best interests. As such I would have had thee remain away from the court to-morrow, and even have sought to use our united influence to detain my father also. But it seems he has set his heart upon the matter even more than I had deemed. I pray the Lord that his retributive justice for this parricidal act fall not heavily on the heads of all of us. If this cause, as ye both believe, be His, can ye not be persuaded that He will avenge Himself on the king without human agency. Is there no hope for Charles Stuart? He is in this house: can no means be contrived for his escape?"

"That were impossible, dearest, guarded as he is on all hands. But if he would abate his hauteur, and plead his cause in the eloquent manner he so well knows how to assume, there might yet, perhaps, exist a hope for him. In this lies his only chance of escape."

At that moment supper was announced, and Alice and Heath repaired with the rest of the company to the refreshment room.

CHAPTER II.

"Hark! the warning tone
Deepens—its word is *death!*"
MRS. HEMANS.

THE large hall clock in Lisle's house had told the hour of eleven, after the marriage described in the last chapter, and some fifteen or twenty minutes had elapsed since the departure of the guests, when the reader is invited into a small upper chamber, in a remote wing of the mansion. It was rather comfortless than otherwise in its whole aspect, and its grated windows and long distance from any adjoining room—being surrounded entirely by galleries—suggested the idea of a place of confinement. It was one of those small rooms, common in large buildings at that period, and scarcely more suitable in its arrangements for an occupant than the waste halls and galleries which led to it. Some hasty preparations had been made for the prisoner's accommodation. Arras had been tacked up, and a fire lighted the rusty grate, which had been long unused, and a rude pallet placed in one corner.

Seated before a table in this chamber, was a person of something less than fifty years of age. He was dressed in plain black velvet, slashed with satin, and on his cloak, which was thrown back, glittered a star belonging to the order of the garter. His hair, thick and black, was slightly sprinkled with gray, and arranged in the custom

of the day with scrupulous exactness. His mustaches were large and curled upward, and his pointed beard was of that formal style, so frequently seen in the portraits of that reign. His face was oval and handsome, the features being regular, notwithstanding that his full brown eyes seemed rather dull as he sat in thought; and a peculiar expression of exceeding melancholy rested upon his countenance. This look of melancholy was not relieved by the marks of any strong ruling passion or principle, nor much indication of individuality of character. Yet withal, it might not have escaped observation, that in the whole aspect there was not wanting a certain air of cold resolution, almost at variance with the mildness of the brow. This person was of the middle height, strongly made, and showing in his entire appearance a dignity denoting the highest birth.

Before him, on the table, lay the miniature of a lovely child, and a large Book of Common Prayer open beside it. He sat gazing upon the picture, until a tear ran slowly down his cheek. It was that of a blooming boy, the bright face shaded by clustered ringlets, and the whole countenance beaming with youthful hope and beauty.

"Sweet child," he said audibly, "may you ascend the throne of the Stuarts under better auspices than I have done! Heaven in its mercy grant that you may never suffer the fate of your wretched father! Or if, at least, such hour of trial ever come upon you, may you not know what it is to be thus alone in your affliction, and separated from all you love on earth—shut out from the sweet sympathies of wife, children, and home, while your rank

and dignity as King of England is trampled upon, and you are imprisoned and tried by your own people!"

His softened mood seemed suddenly to give place to more angry feelings, as, rising up, and the dullness of his eyes brightening to a keen flash, he exclaimed:

"Let this Court continue the mockery of its sitting; let it arraign me day by day, as a traitor, tyrant, and murderer. Am I not Charles Stuart, heir to a mighty line of sovereigns, and shall I stoop to acknowledge its authority, rather than resign myself to whatever fate its villany may impose on me? Methinks already my doom could hardly be aggravated: yon matted floor—those wooden chairs—those grated windows—this narrow room—surely a prison were no worse. Yet perchance—but it cannot—no, it CANNOT be, that the base Cromwell will dare incite them to shed my blood."

At this moment the door opened, and Alice Heath entered the apartment.

"Who is it intrudes upon me at this unseasonable hour?" angrily exclaimed the king, turning round and facing his fair visiter, who approached him, and dropped upon her knee.

"Spare your displeasure, sire!" she said, in the most soothing voice; "I am General Lisle's daughter, but I come to you as a subject and a friend."

"Rise, maiden," said the king, "and talk not of being subject to an imprisoned and belied monarch. Charles Stuart is hardly now a sovereign in name."

"Nevertheless, I would perform my duty by acknowledging him as such," replied Alice, taking his hand, and

then rising. "But it is not merely to admit his title, that I come to him at this hour of the night. I come to beg him to sacrifice his pride as the owner of that same dignity, and stoop to plead his cause for the saving of his life. Know, my liege, that to-morrow, unless you consent to relax your pertinacious refusal to plead your cause, the Court sign the warrant for your execution. I am ignorant whether or not you be all that my father and your enemies believe; but if you be, you are then the less fit to meet death."

"Death! And has it come to this?" exclaimed Charles, setting his teeth, and rapidly pacing the room for some moments, without replying to his gentle visiter, or even heeding her presence.

At length she ventured to approach him.

"I have told you in what alone lies your hope of averting this awful sentence, my lord. I pray you to reflect upon it this night. A little sacrifice of pride—the mere utterance of a few humble words—"

"Sacrifice of pride! utterance of humble words! thou knowest not, girl, of what you speak. Charles Stuart cannot stoop so far, even though it be to save his life. Spirits of my royal ancestors," added he, "spare me from a weakness which would make you blush to own me as your descendant." And he covered his face with his hands.

"If it is permitted to a subject to own the feeling for her king, I compassionate your unhappy case most deeply," said Alice, taking his passive hand, while her tears were falling fast.

A few moments' silence prevailed, which Alice interrupted.

"Can I not induce you," said she at length, "to value the precious boon of your life above the foolish pride of which we were speaking? Think, my lord, how sweet is existence, and all its precious ties of pleasure and affection —and she pointed to the miniature on the table—how awful is a violent death, and how lonely, and dark, and mysterious the tomb. Cannot the consideration of all these things move your purpose?"

"I thank you, sweet maiden, for your noble intention, and may God reward you for your words and wishes of goodness," replied Charles, much touched by her tone of deep interest, "but my resolution is fixed."

"Can you suggest nothing then yourself, my liege, less displeasing to you? Have you no powerful friend whose influence I might this night move in your behalf?"

"Nay, it cannot be," replied the king, after pondering a moment upon her words. "Charles Stuart is deserted on all hands, and it is the Lord's will that he shall die. I begin to look upon it already with resignation. Yet the first intimation came upon me like the stroke of a thunderbolt. Private assassination I have long dreaded; but a public execution I had never dreamed of. Nevertheless, be it so. I shall meet death like a man and a king."

"Then, farewell, since my visit is futile, and the Almighty be your support and comfort in your added affliction," said Alice, as again kissing his hand, and bathing it with tears, she withdrew.

Left alone the king remained for some time in deep

thought. All anger and weakness appeared to have passed from his mood, and the remarkable expression of melancholy which we have before described, deepened on his face to a degree scarce ever seen except upon canvass. Not less heightened, however, was that coldly resolute air likewise previously alluded to—so that if evidently sad, it might likewise have been seen that Charles Stuart was also determined unto death.

What were his reflections in view of the announcement he had just received from the lips of Alice Heath, and which he saw no means of averting, short of sacrificing the dignity with which his rank as sovereign of England invested him, we will not attempt to conjecture. None who have not been in his situation can form anything like an adequate conception of his state of mind; and it were sacrilege to attempt to invade the sanctuary of the human soul in such hour of agony.

Whatever his cogitations were, they were of limited duration; for, after sitting thus for a considerable time, Charles pushed back his chair, and falling upon his knees before the table, he drew the Book of Prayer toward him, and, clasping his hands upon it, read aloud:

"The day of thy servant's calamity is at hand, and he is accounted as one of them that go down to the pit. Blessed Lord, remember thy mercies; give him, we beseech thee, patience in this his time of adversity, and support under the terrors that encompass him; set before his eyes the things which he hath done in the body, which have justly provoked thee to anger; and forasmuch as his continuance appeareth to be short among us, quicken him so much the

more by thy grace and Holy Spirit; that he, being converted and reconciled unto thee before thy judgments have cut him off from the earth, may at the hour of his death depart in peace, and be received into thine everlasting kingdom, through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen."

Rising, he slowly disrobed, and throwing himself upon the bed, soon sunk into a placid slumber. Strange! that sleep of the prisoner in the prospect of death. The excitement of suspense—the palpitation of hope not altogether dead—these banish rest; but when the feverish perturbation caused by expectation departs, and the mind has nothing to feed upon but one dark and fearful certainty, it turns to seek forgetfulness in sleep.

CHAPTER III.

"With my own power my majesty they wound;
In the king's name, the king himself's uncrowned:
So doth the dust destroy the diamond.
CHARLES STUART'S MAJESTY IN MISERY.

"*Sardanapalus.*——————Answer, slave! how long
Have slaves decided on the doom of kings?
Herald.—Since they were free."
BYRON'S SARDANAPALUS.

ALL London was astir. The excited populace filled every street and alley of the vast city. The report that sentence of death was that day to be passed upon Charles Stuart, rung on every tongue, and the popular feeling ran mainly in favour of his condemnation. All business was suspended; and from an early hour crowds were wending their way to Westminster Hall, where the trial was about to be brought to a close.

That specimen of perfect architecture—which modern art is not ashamed to take as a model, but vainly seeks to imitate—had been fitted up with great regard to the smallest details, for this most remarkable occasion. This had been done in order to invest the ceremony of the trial with all the pomp and dignity becoming the delegates of a great nation, sitting in judgment upon their monarch, and trying him for a breach of the trust committed to his care—the weal and peace of the people. Benches, covered with blue velvet, were arranged at the upper end for the accommodation of the judges; and within the bar were strewn thick

carpets and cushions. A splendid chair, to correspond with the benches, was placed for the use of the firm and subtle Bradshaw, who had the honour or disgrace, according as it may be deemed, of presiding over the Court. He was seated before a table covered with crimson drapery, his fine countenance betokening that decision for which he was remarkable, attired in costly dress, and supported on either hand by his assessors.

The galleries were filled to suffocation with spectators; and the main body of the building was thronged with a vast concourse of people, while a regiment of armed soldiery was in attendance, with pieces loaded and ready for use in case any tumult should arise. The Puritan party, now no longer timid or wavering, took no pains to conceal their sense of coming victory; and even Cromwell, usually so guarded in every outward observance, took his seat without the bar, with a look of conscious triumph. A profound stillness prevailed as the judges entered. Fifty-nine only, out of the one hundred and thirty-three, had been able to summon sufficient resolution to be present. With sad and solemn, though severe and determined countenances, these severally seated themselves, apparently filled, almost to a sense of oppression, with the responsibility devolved on them, but seeming not the less resolved to act according to their determination previously agreed upon. Among these were Lisle and Heath, the latter of whom was, perhaps, the only commissioner whose countenance wanted something of the resolute bearing we have described. They had scarcely taken their seats, when the rumbling noise of an approaching vehicle was distinctly heard. The previous silence, if

possible, deepened, and for some moments the multitude, as if moved by one mighty impulse, almost ceased to breathe. Not a hand was in motion—not an air stirred—and scarce a pulse beat, as the ponderous door slowly revolved upon its hinges, and the regal prisoner entered. He cast a look of blended pride and sorrow upon the judges as he walked up to the bar, surrounded by a guard. But he made no token of acknowledgment or reverence, nor did he remove his velvet cap, as he took the seat prepared for him.

The names of the judges were called over. Bradshaw then arose, and in a silvery and ringing tone, which made his declamation peculiarly impressive, while a shade of deepening pallor was perceptible on his countenance, addressed the Court.

He deviated from the usually calm and temperate manner he was accustomed to assume, and became warm and impassioned. As he went on, his rich voice swelled on the air with a clear, distinct intonation, that fell deeply and artfully into the ears of the listeners. He was evidently bent as much on appealing to those without the bar, as to the judges. With the consummate skill of a rhetorician, he first drew the picture of the serf-like slavery of the people, dependent upon the will or caprice of the king. He next pointed out the liberty to which, by a just sentence passed against its tyrant, the nation would be restored. Although a studied simplicity of language pervaded, in general, his remarks, yet, at times, some striking or brilliant metaphor would, as it were, accidentally escape him, which was speedily followed by a loud roar of applause, evincing its full apprecia-

tion by his hearers. He then turned to the prisoner in the following words:

"Charles Stuart, King of England, it is now the fourth time that you have been arraigned before this tribunal. On each occasion you have persisted in contemning its authority and denying its validity—breaking in upon its proceedings with frivolous and impertinent interruptions—frequently turning your back upon the judges—nay, sometimes even laughing outright at the awful charges which have been preferred against you. Since its last convention, witnesses have appeared to prove conclusively that you took up arms against the troops commissioned by the Parliament. Once again, therefore, you are called upon in the name of your country and your God, to plead guilty or not guilty of tyranny, treason, and murder."

No change whatever took place in the king's countenance at hearing these words. When they had ceased, he slowly rose, his head still covered, and made answer:

"I acknowledge not the authority of this Court. Were I to do so, it were to betray the sacred and inviolable trust confided to me in the care of the liberties of the British people. Your delegation, to be legal, should have come alike from the individual voice of the meanest and most ignorant boor of this realm, as from the high and cultivated hypocrites who have empowered you. Should I ratify such an authority—in the eyes of the law not better founded than that of pirates and murderers—I would indeed be the traitor ye would brand me. Nay, let me rather die a martyr to the constitution. But before ye proceed to pronounce the judgment ye threaten, I demand, by all those

rights of inheritance which invest me as a monarch, with a majesty and power second only to the Omnipotent, to be heard before a convention of both houses of Parliament; and, whether or not ye refuse me, I adjure ye, the so-called judges of this Court, as ye each hope to be arraigned at no unlawful or incompetent bar at the final judgment, to pause and reflect, before ye take upon ye the high-handed responsibility of passing sentence upon your king."

He resumed his seat, and after a few moments' intense quiet, William Heath arose, and suggested that the Court would do well to adjourn for a brief season for the purpose of taking into consideration the request of the prisoner.

The expediency of this suggestion was acceded to, and they withdrew and remained for some fifteen or twenty minutes in conference.

On their return, after a few moments' consultation with some of the older judges, Lisle among the rest, Bradshaw, taking a parchment from the table, turned to the king with these words:

"Charles Stuart, you have in your request to be heard before Parliament, as well as in other language addressed by you some moments since to this honourable Court, given a fresh denial of its jurisdiction, and an added proof of your contempt. It has already, by such contumacy on your part, been too long delayed, and must now proceed to pass judgment against you. You have been proven a traitor to England in waging war against her Parliament, and in refusing to plead in your own behalf, or endeavouring to invalidate such proof, justice has no alternative but to demand your death. The following warrant has therefore

been agreed upon by your judges, who will presently affix their signatures thereunto. '*We, the Commissioners appointed by the Commons to sit in trial on Charles Stuart, King of England, arraigned as a traitor, tyrant, and murderer, having found these charges amply substantiated, do, for the glory of God and the liberties of the British people, hereby adjudge him to death.*' "

He ceased: the members of the Court had risen during the reading of the warrant, to testify their concurrence, and the fatal document was now circulated among them to receive their various signatures. It was observed to be written in the chirography of Cromwell.

Throughout the remarks of Bradshaw, Charles had remained with his eyes fixed upon the ground; but while the warrant was being read, he raised them and cast them upon Cromwell, who was standing without the bar. Brief as was this glance, it seemed to convey some momentous truth, for Cromwell became at first scarlet, and then pale as death. Instantly, however, he turned away, and began coolly to unfold the plaits of a white cambric handkerchief, and appeared only occupied with that object.

As soon as the warrant had been passed around to receive the signatures, and Bradshaw had resumed his seat, Charles arose, and with more of dignity than contempt in the act, he turned his back upon the judges—as though his pride would prevent their observing whatever effect their sentence had upon him.

The profound silence which had heretofore prevailed among the crowd, here gave way to loud hisses, and expressions of contempt and disgust; while the soldiers,

instigated by the Roundheads, uttered exclamations of "Justice!" "Justice!"

Charles, on hearing the cries of these latter, turned mildly toward them, and casting on them a look of pity, said, in a tone of voice, which, though not loud, was yet sufficiently distinct to be heard by all within the bar:

"I pity them! for a little money they would do as much against their commanders."

The proceedings closed; and under a strong escort, and amid the shouts of the populace, the noble prisoner was conducted out of the hall. As he proceeded, various outrages were put upon him. With a kingly majesty superior to insult, he received these indignities, as though he deemed them unworthy to excite any emotion within him, save what his sorrowful eye indicated, that of pity for the offenders. Some few, in the midst of the general odium, endeavoured to evince their continued allegiance. But their faint prayer of "God save the king!" was drowned in the swelling cries of "Down with the traitor!" "Vengeance on the tyrant!" "Away with the murderer!" One soldier, who was intentionally or inadvertently heard humming the national air of his country, was stricken to the ground by his officer, just as the king crossed the threshold of the door.

"Poor fellow," said Charles, "methinks his punishment was greater than his offence."

CHAPTER IV.

"Will nothing move him?"
THE TWO FOSCARI.

THE streets of a crowded metropolis, which, with their noise and clamour, their variety of lights, and the eternally changing bustle of their hundred groups, offer, by night especially, a spectacle which, though composed of the most vulgar materials, when they are separately considered, has, when they are combined, a striking and powerful effect upon the imagination.

At a late hour on the following night, when London presented such a scene as we have described, two persons were winding their way to the palace of Whitehall. One was an individual of the male sex, in whom might have been seen, even through the gloom, a polished and dignified bearing, which, together with his dress—though of the Puritanic order—declared him a gentleman of more than ordinary rank. His companion was a delicate woman, evidently like himself of the most genteel class, but attired in the simplest and plainest walking costume of the times. She leaned on his arm with much appearance of womanly trust, although there was an air of self-confidence in her step, suggesting the idea of one capable of acting alone on occasion of emergency, and a striking yet perfectly feminine dignity presiding over her whole aspect.

"I have counselled your visiting him at this late hour," said the gentleman, "because, as the only hope lies in striking terror into his conscience, the purpose may be best answered in the solitude and silence of a season like this. Conscience is a coward in the daylight, but darkness and night generally give her courage to assert her power."

"True, William," replied Alice Heath, (for she it was, and her companion, as the reader is aware by this time, was her husband,) "true—but alas! I fear for the success of my visit; the individual of whom we are speaking deceives himself no less than others, and therefore to him she is a coward at all times. Hast thou not read what my poor dead grandfather's old acquaintance has written about a man's 'making such a sinner of his conscience as to believe his own lies?'"

"I have not forgotten the passage, my Alice, and, ever correct in your judgment, you have penetrated rightly into the singular character we are alluding to. I wot it were hard for himself to say how far he has been actuated by pure, and how far by ambitious motives, in the hand he has had in the sentence of the king. Nevertheless, you would believe his conscience to be not altogether dead, had you seen him tremble and grow pale yesterday in the Court, during the reading of the warrant, (which, by the way, he had worded and written with his own hands,) when Charles Stuart raised his eyes and looked upon him as if to imply that he knew him for the instigator, and no unselfish one either, of his doom. The emotion he then testified, it was, which led me to hope he may yet be operated

upon to prevent the fatal judgment from taking effect. It is true, Charles is a traitor, and I cannot regret that, in being arraigned and tried, an example has been made of him. But having from the first anticipated this result, except for your father, Alice, I would have had no part in the matter, being entirely opposed to the shedding of his blood. All ends which his death can accomplish have already been answered; and I devoutly pray that the effort your gentle heart is now about to make for the saving of his life, may be blessed in procuring that merciful result."

At this moment they paused before the magnificent structure, known as the Palace of Whitehall, and applied for admission. Vacated some time since by the king, it was now occupied by his rival in power, the aspiring Cromwell; and although the hour was so late, the vast pile was still illuminated. Having gained speedy access to the main building, the visiters were admitted by a servant in the gorgeous livery of the fallen monarch. Heath requested to be shown to an ante-room, while Alice solicited to be conducted without previous announcement to the presence of his master. After a moment's hesitation on the part of the servant, which, however, was quickly overcome by her persuasive manner, he conducted her through various spacious halls, and up numerous flights of stairs, till pausing suddenly before the door of a chamber, he knocked gently. As they waited for an answer, the accents of prayer were distinctly audible. They were desired to enter; the servant threw open the door, simply announcing a lady. Alice entered, and found herself alone with Cromwell.

The apartment was an ante-room attached to the spacious bed-chamber formerly belonging to the king. It was luxuriously furnished with all the appliances of ease and elegance suitable to a royal with-drawing room. Tables and chairs of rose-wood, richly inlaid with ivory and mother-of-pearl, were arranged in order around the room; magnificent vases of porcelain decorated the mantel-piece; statues from the chisel of Michael Angelo stood in the niches; and pictures in gorgeous frames hung upon the walls.

There, near a table, on which burned a single-shaded lamp, standing upright, in the attitude of prayer, from which he had just been interrupted, stood the occupant. For an instant, as she lingered near the door, and looked upon his figure, which bore so strongly the impress of power, and felt that on his word hung the fate of him for whom she had come to plead, she already feared for the success of her mission, and would fain almost have retracted her visit. But remembering the accents of prayer she had heard while waiting without, she considered that her purposed appeal was to the conscience of one whom she had just surprised, as it were, in the presence of his Maker, and took courage to advance.

"May I pray thee to approach and be seated, madam, and unfold the object of this visit?" said Cromwell, in a thick, rapid utterance, the result of his surprise, as he waived his visiter to a chair. "At that distance, and by this light, I can hardly distinguish the features of the lady who so inopportunely and unceremoniously honours me with her presence."

Immediately advancing, she threw back her hood, and offering him her hand, said, "It is Alice Heath, the daughter of your friend, General Lisle."

Cromwell's rugged countenance expressed the utmost surprise, as he awkwardly strove to assume a courtesy foreign to his manner, and exchange his first ungracious greeting for something of a more cordial welcome.

With exceeding tact, Alice hastened to relieve his embarrassment, by falling back into the chair he had offered, and at once declaring the purpose of her visit.

"General Cromwell," she began, in a voice sweetly distinct, "you stand high in the eyes of man, not only as a patriot, but a strict and conscientious servant of the Most High. As such, you have been the main instrument in procuring the doom now hanging in awful expectation over the head of him who once tenanted, in the same splendour that now surrounds yourself, the building in which I find you. Methinks his vacation of these princely premises, and your succession thereunto, renders you scarcely capable of being a disinterested advocate for his death—since, by it, you become successor to all the pomp and power formerly his. Have you asked yourself the question whether no motives of self-aggrandizement have tainted this deed of patriotism, or sullied this act of religion?"

"Your language is unwarrantable and unbecoming, madam," said Cromwell, deadly pale and trembling violently; "it is written—"

"Excuse me," said Alice, interrupting him; "you think it uncourteous and even impertinent that I should intrude

upon you with a question such as I but now addressed to you. But, General Cromwell, a human life is at stake, and that the life of no ordinary being, but the descendant of a race of kings. Nay, hear me out, sir, I beg of you. Charles Stuart is about to die an awful and a violent death; your voice has condemned him—your voice can yet save him. If it be your country's weal that you desire, that object has been already sufficiently answered by the example of his trial; or, if it is to further the cause of the Lord of Hosts that you place yourself at the head of Britain in his place, be assured that he who would assert his power by surrounding himself with a pomp like this, is no delegate of One who commissioned Moses to lead his people through the wilderness, a sharer in the common lot, and a houseless wanderer like themselves. Bethink you, therefore, what must be the doom of him, who—for the sake of ambition and pride—in order that he might for the brief space of his life enjoy luxury and power—under the borrowed name, too, of that God who views the act with horror and detestation—stains his hands with parricidal blood. Yes, General Cromwell, for thy own soul's, if not for mercy's sake, I entreat thee, in whom alone lies the power, to cause Charles Stuart's sentence to be remitted."

As she waxed warm in her enthusiasm, Alice Heath had risen and drawn close to Cromwell, who was still standing, as on her entrance, and in her entreaty, she had even laid her hand on his arm. His tremor and pallor had increased every moment while she spoke, and

though at first he would have interrupted her, he seemed very greatly at a loss, and little disposed to reply.

After a few moments' hesitation, during which Alice looked in his face with the deepest anxiety, and awaited his answer, he said, "Go to, young woman, who presumest to interfere between a judge raised up for the redemption of England, and a traitor king, whom the Lord hath permitted to be condemned to the axe. As my soul liveth, and as He liveth, who will one day make me a ruler in Israel, thou hast more than the vanity of thy sex, in hoping by thy foolish speech to move me to lift up my hand against the decree of the Almighty. Truly—"

"Nay, General Cromwell," said Alice, interrupting him, as soon as she perceived he was about to enter into one of his lengthy and pointless harangues, "nay, you evade the matter both with me and with the conscience whose workings I have for the last few moments beheld in the disorder of your frame. Have its pleadings—for to them I look and not to any eloquence of mine own—been of no avail? Will it please you to do aught for the king?"

"Young lady," replied Cromwell, bursting into tears, which he was occasionally wont to do, "a man like me, who is called to perform great acts in Israel, had need to be immovable to feelings of human charities. Think you not it is painful to our mortal sympathies to be called upon to execute the righteous judgments of Heaven, while we are yet in the body. And think you that when we must remove some prime tyrant that the instruments of his removal can at all times view their part in his punish-

ment with unshaken nerves? Must they not even at times doubt the inspiration under which they have felt and acted? Must they not occasionally question the origin of that strong impulse which appears the inward answer to prayer for direction under heavenly difficulties, and, in their disturbed apprehensions, confuse even the responses of truth with the strong delusions of Satan? Would that the Lord would harden my heart even as he hardened that of—"

"Stop, sir," said Alice, again interrupting him ere his softened mood should have passed away, "utter not such a sacrilegious wish. Why are the kindly sympathies which you describe implanted in your bosom, unless it be to prevent your ambition from stifling your humanity? The rather encourage them, and save Charles Stuart. Let your mind dwell upon the many traits of nobleness in his character which might be mentioned with enthusiasm, ay, and with sorrow, too, that they should be thus sacrificed."

"The Most High, young woman, will have no fainters in spirit in his service—none who turn back from Mount Gilead for fear of the Amalekites. To be brief—it waxes late; to discuss this topic longer is but to distress us both. Charles Stuart must die—the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it."

As he spoke, he bowed with a determined but respectful reverence, and when he lifted up his head, the expression of his features told Alice that the doom of the king was irrevocably fixed.

"I see there is no hope," said she, with a deep sigh, as

Cromwell spoke these words in a tone of decision which left her no further encouragement, and with a brevity so unusual to him. Nor was his hint to close the interview lost upon her. "No hope!" she repeated, drawing back. "I leave you, then, inexorable man of iron, and may you not thus plead in vain for mercy at the bar of God."

So saying, she turned and rejoined her husband, who remained in waiting for her: they returned together to Lisle's house.

CHAPTER V.

"The convent bells are ringing,
But mournfully and slow;
In the gray, square turret swinging,
With a deep sound, to and fro,
Heavily to the heart they go!
Hark! the hymn is singing—
The song for the dead below,
Or the living who shortly shall be so!"

BYRON'S PARISINA.

THE thirtieth of January, memorable in history, rose gloomy and dark, as though the heavens would express their sympathy with the tragedy about to be enacted.

Three days only had been allowed the condemned prisoner between his sentence and his execution. This interval, during the day, he had spent chiefly in reading and prayer. On each night he had slept long and soundly, although the noise of the workmen employed in framing his scaffold, and making other preparations for his execution distinctly reached his ears.

On the morning of the fatal day he rose early, and calling his attendant, desired him to employ great care in dressing and preparing him for the unusual solemnity before him.

At length he appeared, attired in his customary suit of black, arranged with more than his wonted neatness. His collar, edged with deep lace, and set carefully around his neck, was spotless in colour, and accurate in every fold,

while his pensive countenance exhibited no evidence of emotion or excitement.

Bishop Juxon assisted him at his devotions, and paid the last melancholy duties to the king. After this, he was permitted to see such of his family as were still in England. These consisted only of his two younger children, the Princess Elizabeth and the Duke of Gloucester.

Notwithstanding the tender years of the young Elizabeth, she seemed fully to appreciate her father's unhappy situation, and her young heart appeared well-nigh bursting.

"Weep not for thy father, child," said Charles, kissing her tenderly; "he but goeth where thou mayst one day meet him again."

She threw her arms around his neck, and sobbed aloud. He pressed her to his bosom and soothed her gently, but seemed, for the first time since his interview with Alice Heath, on the night previous to his sentence, half unmanned. "It is God, my love, who hath called thy poor parent hence, and we must submit to his will in all things. Bear my love to your mother, and tell her that my last thoughts were with her and our precious children."

Separating himself from her by a great effort, and then pressing the boy to his heart, he motioned to the attendants to remove them, lest the trial of this interview might, at the last, unnerve his well-sustained resolution and courage.

The muffled bells now announced with mournful distinctness that the fatal moment was approaching. The noisy tramp of the excited populace—ever eager to sate their vulgar gaze on any bloody spectacle, but anticipating extraordinary gratification from the novel sight of the execu-

tion of their king—was plainly audible. Presently, the guard came to lead him out. He was conducted by a private gallery and staircase into the court below, and thence conveyed in a sedan-chair to the scaffold, followed by the shouts and cries of the crowd.

About the time that these sounds were dying away from the neighbourhood of Lisle's house, William Heath hastily entered the library, and taking pen and paper, wrote the following brief letter:

"My dear Alice:—

"I cannot but rejoice, that after finding, as we believed, all hope of Charles Stuart at an end—your visit to Cromwell having been unsuccessful—I removed you to a distance, until the tragical scene should, as we thought, be ended. The tumult and noise which fill the city, together with the consciousness of the cause creating it, would have been too much for your nerves, unstrung as they have been of late, by the feeling you have expended for the unhappy king. There is yet, though, I delight to say, and you will delight to hear, a single hope remaining for him, even while the bells now ring for his execution. Lord Fairfax, who though, like myself, friendly to his deposition, still shudders at the thoughts of shedding his blood, will, with his own regiment, make an attempt to rescue him from the scaffold. There is, in fact, scarce any reason to doubt the success of this measure; and this evening, Alice, we will rejoice together that the only cloud to dim the first blissful days of our union has been removed, as I shall rejoin you at as early an hour as the distance will permit.

"I write this hastily, and send it by a speedy messenger, in order to relieve, by its agreeable tidings, the sorrowful state of mind in which I left you a few hours since. I am, my own Alice, your most affectionate husband,

"WILLIAM HEATH."

The street before Whitehall was the place prepared for the execution. This arrangement had been made, in order to render the triumph of popular justice over royal power more conspicuous, by beheading the king in sight of his own palace. All the surrounding windows and galleries were filled with spectators, and the vast crowd below were kept back by soldiery encircling the scaffold. Charles mounted it with a steady step, and the same dignified resolution of mien which he had all along so admirably maintained. Uncovering his head, he looked composedly around him and said, in a clear, unfaltering voice, though only sufficiently loud to be heard by those near him, owing to the buzz of the crowd:

"People of England, your king dies innocent. He is sentenced for having taken up arms against Parliament. Parliament had first enlisted forces against him, and his sole object—as God is his judge, before whom he is momently to appear—was to preserve, as was his bounden duty, inviolate for himself and his successors, that authority transmitted to him by royal inheritance. Yet, although innocent toward you, and in that view undeserving of death, in the eyes of the Omniscient his other sins amply merit his coming doom; in especial, having once suffered an unjust sentence of death to be executed against another, it is but meet that

he should now die thus unjustly himself. May God lay not his death in like manner to your charge; and grant that in allegiance to my son, England's lawful sovereign at my decease, you may speedily be restored to the ways of peace."

Lord Fairfax, with his regiment, prepared for the rescue of Charles, was proceeding toward the place of execution by a by-street, at the same time that the king was being conducted thither. On his way he was passed by Cromwell, who then, for the first time, became aware of his purpose.

Much disturbed in mind at the discovery of a project so likely to thwart his own ambitious views, just ripe for fulfilment, the latter walked on for some moments in deep reflection. Presently quickening his pace, he turned a corner, and stepped, without knocking, into a house near by. His manner was that of a person perfectly at home in the premises, which, indeed, was the case; for James Harrison, the tenant, was one of his subservients, chosen by him in consequence of his austere piety, and great influence with his sect, of whom it will be recollected that Fairfax was one. Harrison's appearance, though coarse, was not actually vulgar. He was a middle-aged man, tall and strongly made, and his manner, rough and military, might command fear, but could not excite ridicule. Cromwell found him in prayer, notwithstanding all the tumult of the day.

"I have sought thee, Harrison," he said, "to beseech thee engage in prayer with Lord Fairfax, who is now on his way to rescue this Saul from the hand of the Philistines. He should first crave the Lord's will in regard to his errand. Wilt thou not seek him and mind him of this?"

"I will e'en do thy bidding, thou servant of the Most High," said Harrison, rising and accompanying him to the door. "Where shall I find Fairfax?"

"Thou wilt overtake him by turning speedily to the right," replied the other, parting from him.

"One of his lengthy supplications at the throne of grace," said Cromwell to himself, as he walked on, "will detain Fairfax until this son of Belial is destroyed."

Meanwhile, upon the scaffold, Charles, after delivering his address, was preparing himself for the block with perfect equanimity and composure.

"There is but one stage more, sire," said Juxon, with the deepest sympathy of look and manner. "There is but one stage more. Though turbulent, it is a very short one; yet it will carry you a long distance—from earth to heaven."

"I go," replied the king, "from a corruptible to an incorruptible crown, where no downfal can transpire."

So saying, he laid his head upon the block, and the headsman, standing near, in a visor, at one blow struck it from his body. Another man, in a corresponding disguise, catching it, and holding it up, exclaimed, "Behold the head of a traitor!"

At this moment Lord Fairfax and his regiment came up. His humane purpose, so artfully defeated, becoming known, with the strange perversity of mankind, now that its benefits were too late to reach the king, an instant revulsion in the feelings of the populace took place; and the noise of quarrels—of reproaches and self-accusations rent the air, until the tumult grew terrific.

But the reverberation of no thunder-clap could have re-

awaked the dissevered corpse of the dead monarch. Charles Stuart, the accomplished scholar and elegant poet—Charles Stuart, the husband, father, friend—Charles Stuart, the descendant of a long line of sovereigns, and legitimate king of the most potent nation upon earth—was no more; and a human life was blotted from existence! That life, what was it? Singular and mysterious essence—capable of exquisite pleasure and intense pain—held by such a precarious tenure, yet valued beyond all price—the gift of God, and destroyed by man—a moment past here, and now gone for ever—tell us, metaphysician, what was it, for we cannot answer the question.

CHAPTER VI.

"Patience and sorrow strove
Which should express their goodliest."
SHAKSPEARE.

WE pass over that brief period in history during which the new form of government established by Cromwell flourished, and the usurper and his successor, under the title of Protector of the Commonwealth, enjoyed a larger share of power than had previously been attached to the regal dignity. It will be remembered that the deficiency of the latter in those qualities requisite to his responsible position soon led him formally to resign the Protectorship, and his abdication speedily paved the way for the restoration of Charles II. to the throne of his ancestors. Unfortunately for the chief characters of our tale, one of the first and most natural aims of the new king on his accession, was to seek the conviction and punishment of the Court who had so presumptuously, although, in many instances, so conscientiously, passed that sentence against his father, which we have seen reluctantly carried into execution.

Many of those had fled at the first rumour of the restoration, in anticipation of the worst, so that, on the command of Charles, only twenty-seven persons—judges and accomplices inclusive—could be arrested. These had now been incarcerated three weeks awaiting their trial, which

was deferred, from time to time, in the hope that more of the regicides might yet be brought to justice.

Among those thus imprisoned were Henry Lisle and William Heath, whose fates are interwoven with this narrative.

Leaving this needful preface to what is to follow, let us again visit Lisle's mansion—the same which witnessed the marriage of his daughter. Several years have elapsed since that event; and after the mournful impression caused by the death of the ill-fated king had been obliterated from her mind—for Time has the power speedily to heal all wounds not absolutely inflicted upon the affections—till within the last few weeks, the life of Alice Heath had flowed in as smooth a current as any who had beheld her on her wedding-night could, in their most extravagant wishes, have desired. In their untroubled union, her husband had heretofore forestalled the wife's privilege to minister and prove devotion—a privilege which, however, when the needful moment demanded it, no woman better than Alice was formed for exerting. Trouble had not hitherto darkened the young brow of either; nor pain, nor sorrow, nor the first ungratified wish, come nigh their dwelling. Under the same roof with her pious and austere, but still affectionate, father, the daughter had been torn from no former tie in linking herself to another by a still nearer and more indissoluble bond. There had been nothing to desire, and nothing to regret. The life of herself and husband had been as near a type as may be of the perfect happiness we picture in heaven—save that with

them it was now exchanged for sorrow—more difficult to bear from the bitter contrast.

It is an afternoon in September. Alice, not materially changed since we last saw her—except that the interval has given, if anything, more of interest and character to her features—is in her own room, busily engaged in arranging articles in a travelling-trunk. Her countenance is sad—with a sadness of a more engrossing and heartfelt kind than that which touched it with a mournful shadow when she grieved for the fate of Charles Stuart—for there is an incalculable difference between the sorrow that is expended between a mere object of human sympathy, and that which is elicited by the distress and danger of those we love. And the sadness of Alice was now connected with those dearer to her than life itself. No tear, however, dimmed her eye, nor shade of despair sat upon her brow. Feeling that the emergency of the occasion called upon her to act, not only for herself but for others, the bravery of true womanly resolution in affliction—resolution which, had she alone been concerned, she might perhaps never have evinced, but which, for the sake of others, she had at once summoned to her aid—was distinguishable in her whole deportment as well as in her every movement.

As she was engaged with great seeming interest in the task we have described—the articles alluded to consisting of the clothing suitable for a female child of tender age—the little creature for whose use it was designed was sitting at her feet tired of play, and wondering probably why she was employed in this unusual manner. Alice frequently

paused in her occupation to cast a look upon the child—not the mere hasty glance with which a mother is wont to satisfy herself that her darling is for the moment out of mischief or danger—but a long, devouring gaze, as though the refreshing sight were about to be removed for ever from her eyes, and she would fain, ere the evil moment arrived, stamp its image indelibly on her memory. Who shall say what thoughts, what prayers, were then stirring in her bosom?

The little object of this solicitude had scarcely told her fifth year; and the soft ringlets which descended half-way down the shoulders, the delicate bloom, the large, deep blue eyes and flexile features, made such an ideal of childish beauty as artists love to paint, or sculptors model.

When Alice had finished her employment, she took the little girl in her arms, and strained her for some moments to her heart, with a feeling, as it would seem, almost of agony. The child, though at first alarmed at the unusual vehemence of her caresses, presently, as if prompted by nature, smiled in reply to them. But the artless prattler had no power to rouse her from some purpose on which her thoughts appeared deeply as well as painfully intent. Putting the little creature aside again, she drew near to her writing-desk, and, seating herself before it, penned the following letter:

"My dear Friend:

"It is now some weeks since the imprisonment of my husband and father, who are still awaiting their trial. The active part which the latter is known to have taken

in the punishment of the late unhappy king, precludes all hope of their pardon. But I have matured a plan for their escape, which I am only waiting a fitting moment to put into execution. When this is effected we will take refuge in your American Colonies. I have the promise of influential friends there to assist in secreting us until it shall be safe to dwell among you publicly—for this country can never again be our home.

"In the mean time, as some friends are about embarking, after a struggle with myself, I have concluded to send my little daughter in advance of us, lest she might prove an incumbrance in the way of effecting the escape alluded to, inasmuch as she has already been a great hindrance to detain me at home many hours from the dear prisoners—to both of whom my presence is so needful, especially to my husband, who is extremely ill in his confinement.

"I need not say that I feel all a mother's anxiety in parting with my child. But I have confidence that you, my friend, will faithfully supply my place for as long a time as may be necessary. It has occurred to me that it would be well to let the impression go abroad among you that my daughter is the young relative whom you were to receive by the same vessel, and of whose recent death you will be apprised. This may shield her in some measure from the misfortunes of her family; and I would be glad, therefore, if you would humour the innocent deception even with all of your household, until such time as we may reclaim her. With a firm reliance on my heavenly Father, I commit my precious infant to his protection.

"ALICE HEATH."

She had just concluded, when a servant appeared at the door. "Some ladies and a gentleman, madam," said he, "have called, and are awaiting you in the drawing-room. They came in a travelling-carriage, and are equipped as if for a long journey."

"Remove this trunk into the hall," replied Alice, "and then say to the visiters that I will see them presently. They have already come to bear away my darling," added she to herself. "I scarce thought that the hour had yet arrived."

As she spoke, she set about attiring the child with great tenderness, seemingly prolonging the act unconsciously to herself.

"Now the Lord in heaven keep thee, precious one!" she exclaimed, as, at length, the motherly act terminated; and imprinting on her face a kiss of the most ardent affection, though without giving way to the weakness of a single tear, she bore her from the chamber.

We leave the reader to imagine the last parting moments between that mother and her child. She who had framed the separation as an act of duty, was not one to shrink at the last moment, or betray any faintness of spirit. With a nobly heroic heart she yielded up the young and helpless treasure of her affections to the guardianship of others, and turned to expend her capacities of watchfulness and care upon another object. How well she performed this labour of love, notwithstanding the trial she had just experienced—how far she succeeded in dismissing the recollection of it from her mind sufficiently to enable her to sustain the weight of the responsibilities still devolving

upon her—we shall now have an opportunity to determine.

Within another half hour Alice entered the cell of a prison. It was one of those constructed for malefactors of the deepest cast, being partially under the ground, and partaking of the nature of a dungeon. The mighty stones of the wall were green and damp, and, together with the cold, clay floor, were sufficient of themselves to suggest speedy illness, and perhaps death, to the occupant. Its only furniture consisted of a single wooden stool, a pallet of straw, and a rude table.

On the pallet alluded to lay a man in the prime of life, his eyes closed in sleep, and the wan hue of death upon his countenance. One pallid hand, delicate and small as a woman's, rested upon the coarse coverlet, while the other was placed beneath his head, from which streamed forth a profusion of waving hair, now matted and dull, instead of glossy and bright, as it had been in recent days.

When Alice first entered, the sleeper was breathing somewhat disturbedly, but as she approached and bent over him, and raising the hand which lay upon the quilt, pressed it to her lips, his rest suddenly seemed to grow calm, and a faint smile settled upon his mouth.

"Thank God!" whispered she to herself, as she replaced the hand as quietly as she had raised it, "my prayer is heard—the fever has left him, and he is fast recovering."

Seating herself on the wooden stool by his side, she remained watching him with looks of the most devoted interest and affection. In about half an hour he heaved a deep sigh, and, opening his eyes, looked around to the spot where she was sitting.

"You are a guardian angel, dear Alice," said he; "even in my dreams I am conscious of your presence."

"Saving the little time that I must steal from you to bestow upon my poor father, I shall now be ever present with you," answered Alice. "I have placed our little one in safe-keeping, and henceforth, while you remain here, I shall have no other care but yourself."

"Methinks I have already been too much your sole care, even to the neglect of your own health. Yet, except that sad look of sympathy, you seem not the worse for the tending me, else I might, indeed, reproach myself for this illness."

Well might William Heath say she had nursed him with unselfish care, for never had it fallen to the lot of sick man to be tended with such untiring devotion. For weeks she had watched his every movement and look — anticipated his every wish—smoothed his pillow—held the cup to his parched lips—soothed him with gentle and sympathizing words when in pain—cheered him when despondent—and seized only the intervals when he slept to perform her other duties as a mother and daughter. It is no wonder, therefore, that it appeared to him that she had never been absent from his side.

Gently repelling his insinuation that she had been too regardless of herself, she turned the conversation to a topic which she was conscious would interest and cheer him.

"Continue to make all speed with this recovery, which has thus far progressed so finely," said she, "for the opportunity for your escape from this gloomy place is only

waiting until your strength is sufficiently recruited to embrace it."

"That prospect it is alone," replied the invalid, "held up before me so constantly as it has been during my illness, which has had the power to prevent my sinking joyfully into the grave from this miserable bed, rather than recover to die a more violent and unnatural death."

"It waits alone for your recovery, dearest," repeated his wife; "and once in the wild woods of America, you will be as unconfined and free as her own mountain air, till the very remembrance of this dungeon will have passed away."

"Sweet comforter," he said, taking her hand and pressing it gratefully, "thou wouldst beguile my thoughts thither, even before my footsteps are able to follow them."

"Thank me for nothing," said Alice; "I am but selfish in all. The rather return thanks to the Lord for all his mercies."

"True, He is the great fountain of goodness, and his greatest of all blessings to me, Alice, is bestowed in thyself."

"I fear thou art conversing too much," said Alice, after a moment's pause, "and I would not that a relapse should retard this projected escape a single day. Therefore I will give thee a cordial, and thou must endeavour to rest again."

So saying, she administered a soothing potion, and, seating herself by his side, she watched him until he fell into a peaceful slumber. Then, stealing so noiselessly away from his pallet that her footsteps were inaudible, she gently

approached the door, and groped along a gallery—for it was now dark—until she reached another door. It communicated with a cell similar in all respects to that we have described.

Within this, before a table, sat the figure of a solitary man. He was elderly, but seemed more bent by some recent sorrow than by the actual weight of years; yet his brow was somewhat wrinkled, and his locks in many places much silvered with gray. But his countenance was remarkable, for it evinced a grandeur and dignity of soul even through its trouble. Beside him, upon the table, burned a solitary candle, whose long wick shed a blue and flickering light upon the page of a Bible open before him.

Unlatching the door, Alice paused, for the clear and deep voice of the inmate fell upon her ear: "Behold, happy is the man whom God correcteth: therefore, despise not thou the chastening of the Almighty: for he maketh sore, and bindeth up; he woundeth, and his hands make whole. He shall deliver thee in six troubles: yea, in seven, there shall no evil touch thee."

Advancing, Alice threw her arms affectionately round the neck of the person we have described, and interrupted the reading, which, even more than her occasional visits, was his chief stay and solace in his imprisonment.

"Thou wilt rejoice with me, my father, that William is recovering. All that is needful now is for him to gather strength sufficient to quit this place. I trust that ere six weeks have elapsed we shall be on our way to America."

"Forget not, my child, Him to whom thy thanks are

due for thy husband's prospect of recovery. Remember the Lord in the midst of his mercies."

"I do, my father, and we will return praises together ere I leave you."

"Saidst thou, Alice," asked the old man, after a short silence, "that before six weeks have passed away, we may be freed from this prison-house?"

"Yes, even so; and I have this day sent my infant in advance of us."

"The Lord hath indeed been gracious to us, my daughter. Let us arise at once and give thanks to his holy name."

At these words they arose together, after the manner of their sect, and in an earnest, pathetic tone, the voice of the aged Puritan ascended to Heaven. No palace halls or brilliant ball-rooms, or garden walks, or trellised bowers have ever shown so interesting a pair—no festive scenes, or gorgeous revels, or glittering orgies, ever rose upon so beauteous an hour as did the captive's cell in that season of prayer!

CHAPTER VII.

"A lovely child she was, of looks serene,
And motions which on things indifferent shed
The grace and gentleness from whence they came."
SHELLEY.

"The child shall live."
TITUS ANDRONICUS.

"Here are two pilgrims,
And neither knows one footstep of the way."
HEYWORD'S DUCHESS OF SUFFOLK.

"With equal virtue formed, and equal grace,
The same, distinguished by their sex alone."
THOMPSON.

A SHORT gap in this narrative places the present action of our story in America. It is needless here to narrate the first settlement of the New England Colonies. The landing of the Pilgrim Fathers has been immortalized both in prose and verse until it has become as familiar to each American as any household word. We will not, therefore, ask the reader's detention at the perusal of a thrice-told tale. It is likewise known that that landing was but the herald of a succession of immigrations, and the establishment of numerous colonies. Owing to the talent and liberal education, not less than the enterprise of the early settlers, this wilderness was not long, in spite of repeated obstacles, ere it grew up into flourishing villages and towns, some of them fairer than had ever graced the stalworth ground of Old England.

We introduce the reader into one of those villages,

situated some twenty miles distant from New Haven. It might somewhat surprise him when we say, were it not for the frequent instances of the rapid growth of cities in our western wilds, which we would remind him have sprung up within his own recollection, that the latter place was, even at the period to which we refer, a flourishing and important town. Yet, notwithstanding the superior size and consequence of New Haven, the village of L—— was the place in which the governor of the colony chose to reside.

Had the course of our narrative not led us thither, we could have selected no better sample than L——, of the truth of what we have asserted regarding the existence of neat and attractive villages in New England at that early day. It was situated on the highroad, in a small valley, through which wound down certain rocky falls, a clear rivulet, that afforded excellent opportunities of fishing to such of the inhabitants as were fond of the occupation of the angle. These, however, were few, for then, as now, the people of Connecticut possessed much of the same busy spirit which is one of their distinguishing characteristics. The glassy brook alluded to, served yet another purpose during the season when the sportive inhabitants of the watery element had disappeared. In the winter-time, when thickly frozen over, it formed, out of their school-houses, the grand resort of the children of the village for the purpose of skating and sliding. There, at those times, on a clear, bracing day, such as no country but New England ever shows in perfection, might always be seen a crowd of these happy beings, of both sexes, and of various ages, all collected to-

gether, some to partake and others merely to observe the amusements mentioned.

Upon a certain day, the neighbourhood of the brook was thronged even to a greater extent than usual, owing to the exceeding brightness of the weather, which had led some of the tenderest mothers to withhold their customary mandate enjoining immediate return from school, lest the beloved object of the command might suffer from playing in the cold. Among those who had thus had their ordinary restrictions remitted, was a little girl, whose extreme loveliness must have arrested the attention of any observer. Her features were not merely beautiful, but there was a charm in her countenance more attractive still—that purity and mildness which our fancy attributes to angels. There was a bewitching grace, moreover, in her attitude that might have furnished delighted employment to the painter and sculptor, had there been any time or inclination among the colonists to bestow upon the cultivation of the arts.

This child was seemingly about five years old. She was standing, with a number of other little ones of her own age, looking on with great apparent delight—now at the larger boys, who were skating dexterously, and describing many a circle and angle, unknown in mathematics, upon the smooth surface of the brook, and then at a number of girls merrily chasing each other upon a slide at one side.

As one of the large boys spoken of passed her, he said, "Come, Jessy, I will give you a ride upon the ice;" and taking her in his arms, he was soon again gliding rapidly along.

"Take care!" shouted a noble-looking youth, whose glowing complexion and sparkling eye shone with the excitement of the exercise. "Take care, the ice is slightly cracked there, and it will scarcely bear the double weight."

It was too late. Ere the words were well spoken, the ice gave way, and the boy who bore the fair burden sunk beneath the congealed element.

One loud shriek from the mingled voice of the young spectators announced the frightful accident.

With the speed of lightning, the youth who had uttered the words of warning darted forward, and plunging under the ice, disappeared from view.

Great consternation prevailed for some moments. Many of the children gave way to loud cries; others quietly wept; while a few of the older and more considerate ran toward their homes, in order to summon assistance.

In less time than it has taken to represent the state of feeling which prevailed during his absence, Frank Stanley rose to the surface, bearing in his arms the unconscious form of the young creature he had saved. Recovering his position on the ice, he speedily regained the shore, and overcome with the exertion, laid her gently on the ground.

The heart in his bosom was frozen with cold, but a quickening thrill passed through it, boy as he was, as he gazed upon those sweetly composed features. Her hair was dripping, and her long, wet lashes lay upon her cheek as quietly as upon that of a dead child. Her garments hung heavily around her, and her tiny hands, which were half lost in their folds, were cold and still, as well as beautiful as gems of classic sculpture.

As his companions came up, bearing the other sufferer, Frank Stanley hastily snatched off his own saturated coat, and spread it over her senseless body, ere he again, with recovered strength, raised her in his arms.

The alarmed villagers by this time came flocking to the spot, among whom was the governor of the settlement, whose venerable and striking countenance manifested peculiar anxiety.

"Your niece is safe, Governor H——," said Frank Stanley, pressing forward and exposing his fair burden. "She is merely insensible from fright."

"Thank God that she is saved!" exclaimed the Governor, receiving her in his arms. "But whose rash act was it," continued he, looking sternly around among the boys, "that exposed my Jessy to such peril?"

Something like a flush of indignation passed over the countenance of young Stanley, as he replied, "It was an accident, sir, which might have happened in the hands of more experienced persons than ourselves."

"Thou hast been in danger thyself, Frank, hast thou not?" asked the Governor, his stern mood giving way immediately at the sight of the youth's dripping clothes. "And is there no one else more dangerously injured?" inquired he, casting an anxious, scrutinizing glance among the collected group.

"Frederic, here, is wet too, but not otherwise the worse for the accident."

"Let him and Frank, then, immediately return to their homes, and don dry garments; and I must look to my little girl here, that she do not suffer for this."

So saying, the Governor turned and departed, pressing the little lifeless one more closely in his arms.

His disappearance was the signal for the dispersion of the group, the young members of which turned toward their homes, much sobered in spirits from the accident here related.

Following Governor H. to his home, we will leave him for a moment and pause to describe that rustic dwelling. It was situated at some little distance from the main village, and was of larger size than most of the cottages there. Like them, however, it bore the same rural name, though it looked more like an English villa of some pretensions. On each side of a graceful portico stretched piazzas, covered in summer with roses and woodbine, while the neat enclosure in front, surrounded by its white paling, bloomed richly with American plants and shrubbery. At this season, however, the roses were dead, and the shrubbery lifeless; and the frozen ground of the well-kept walk rung under the tread of the stout governor, as he flung open the gate and rapidly approached the house.

The brilliant lustre of the brass knocker, the white and spotless door-step, and the immaculate neatness of everything around, were types of the prevailing habits of the proprietors.

At the door, awaiting Governor H.'s arrival, with great anxiety depicted on their faces, stood two female figures, the one being a genteel matron, somewhat advanced in years, and the other a young lady of less than twenty summers.

"Relieve yourselves of your apprehensions," said the

Governor, in a loud voice, as soon as he came within speaking distance. "She had merely fainted from fright, and seems to be even now gradually recovering."

"The Lord be praised!" exclaimed the ladies, advancing to the steps of the portico to meet him.

They entered the house together. In a moment the fainting child was laid upon a couch, and being quickly attired in dry clothing, restoratives were actively applied. The elder female chafed her small, chilled palms in her own, while the younger administered a warm drink to her frozen lips.

After a short time she unclosed her eyes, smiled faintly, and throwing her dimpled arms around the neck of the young lady who bent over her, burst into tears. "My dear sister," she said faintly, "I dreamed that I had gone to heaven, where I heard sweet music, and saw little children like myself, with golden crowns upon their heads, and beautiful lyres in their hands."

"God has not called thee there yet. He has kindly spared thee to us a little longer," said the young person to whom she spoke, stooping down and kissing her tenderly, while she, in like manner, relieved herself by a flood of tears.

"The Almighty is very merciful," said the matron, wiping her eyes, while something like a moisture hung upon the lashes of the Governor's piercing orbs, and dimmed their usual keenness.

"I am not ill, uncle, aunt, Lucy, and we need none of us cry," said the child, with the fickleness of an April day and the elasticity of her years, instantly changing her

tears for smiles. "See, I am able to get up," she added, disentangling herself from the embrace of her whom she had called her sister, and sitting upon the side of the couch.

At that moment a shadow without attracted her attention. "There is Mr. Elmore, Lucy!" she exclaimed, with childish glee.

The young lady had barely time to wipe away the traces of her recent emotion, when a tall figure crossed the portico and entered the room without ceremony. The new comer was a young man in the bloom of youth. As he entered he lifted his hat, and a quantity of fair brown hair fell partially over a commanding forehead. His features were handsome, and his aspect both manly and prepossessing.

The Governor and his wife advanced and greeted him cordially, while the blush that mantled on the cheek of Lucy Ellet, as she half rose and extended her hand to him, told that a sentiment warmer than mere friendship existed between them.

"Where is the young heroine of this accident, which I hear had well-nigh proved fatal?" asked the stranger, after he had exchanged congratulations with the rest.

The little Jessy, who had at first shrunk away with the bashfulness of childhood, here timidly advanced. The stranger smiled, stroked her soft ringlets, kissed her fair brow, and she nestled herself in his breast.

The whole party drawing near the fire, an interesting specimen was now exhibited of those social and endearing habits of the early settlers peculiar to their intercourse.

The simple room and furniture were eloquent of the

poetry of home. Not decorated by any appendages of mere show, whatever could contribute to sterling comfort was exhibited in every nook and corner of the good-sized apartment. The broad, inviting couch on which the rescued child had lain was placed opposite the chimney. The heavy book-case, containing the family library, occupied a deep recess to the right. On the left was a side-board, groaning with plate, the remains of English wealth. The large, round dining-table, polished as a mirror, stood in its customary place in the centre of the room. Two great arm-chairs, covered with chintz and garnished with rockers —the seats belonging to the heads of the family—filled a space on either side of the hearth, within which burned a huge turf fire, that threw its kindly warmth to the remotest walls. Over the mantel-piece hung a full-length miniature portrait of the first Protector of the British Commonwealth. Coiled on a thick rug before the fire lay a large Angola cat. A mastiff dog had so far overcome his natural antipathy to her race, as to keep her company on the other side; while the loud breathings of both evinced the depth of their slumbers.

The huge arm-chair on the left was the throne of the Governor. There he received and dispatched the documents pertaining to his office. There also he wrote his letters, read his papers, received his visiters, conversed with his friends, and chatted with his family. There, besides, he gave excellent advice to such of the members of the settlement as needed it; and there, above all, arose morning and evening the voice of his pious worship.

The lesser arm-chair on the right was the seat of Mrs.

H., who, in like manner, had her established routine of duties which she discharged there, with not less laudable exactness and fidelity. Nor was there at any time a more pleasing feature in the whole apartment than her motherly figure and cheerful visage fixed within its comfortable embrace.

While the party were agreeably engaged in conversation they were suddenly interrupted by a loud knock at the door.

"Who can that be?" said the Governor. "Will you ask who knocks, Mr. Elmore?"

The latter rose and unlatched the door, when two figures crossed the threshold.

"Pray pardon us," said one of the new comers, in a courteous voice, "but having business of importance with the Governor, we have ventured to intrude," and he lifted his hat with something of foreign urbanity.

The speaker was not handsome, but there was a certain elegance in his air and intelligence in his countenance that were agreeable. He was clad in a velvet travelling-dress, and possessed an address greatly superior to any of the villagers, at the same time that his height and the breadth of his muscular limbs were calculated to induce that admiration which the appearance of great strength in his sex always inspires.

His companion was totally different in all outward respects—being a man of about fifty years of age, attired in a garb which was chiefly distinguished by an affectation of ill-assorted finery. A coloured silk handkerchief, in which glittered a large paste brooch, was twisted around his neck,

and his breeches were ornamented with plated buckles. His harsh countenance was traced with furrows, while his hair fell over a low and forbidding brow, on which hung a heavy frown, unrelieved by any pleasing expression of the other features.

"Walk in, gentlemen, and approach the fire," said Governor H., rising and eyeing the strangers with a keen and rather dissatisfied glance.

In drawing near, the younger gallant cast an unsuppressed look of admiration upon Lucy Ellet, that caused her to bend down her sparkling eyes, which had previously been fixed on himself and his companion with an arch expression of penetrating curiosity.

It was not surprising that the attention of the stranger had been attracted by the appearance of this young lady, for, like the little Jessy, she was endowed with a more than ordinary share of personal attractions. Yet it must be admitted that the styles of their beauty were of an exactly opposite cast. One of those singular freaks of Nature which sometimes creates children of the same parents in the most dissimilar mould, seemed to have operated in their case, to produce two sisters as unlike in every particular relating to outward appearance as possible.

While the young countenance of Jessy was of the tenderest and softest Madonna cast, her eyes of a delicate azure, and the light golden locks parted upon a fair brow, like a gleam of sunshine upon a hill of snow, her sister's face was precisely the opposite. Lucy's complexion, indeed, was of the darkest hue ever seen in maidens of English birth, yet mantled withal by so rich a shade of colour,

that for many it might have possessed a greater charm than the fairness of a blonde. Her hair was black as night; and her eyes, of the same hue, were never excelled in lustre or beauty by the loveliest damsels of Spain. Her countenance was of a lively and expressive character, in which spirit and wit seemed to predominate; and the quick black eye, with its beautifully pencilled brow, seemed to presage the arch remark to which the rosy and half-smiling lip appeared ready to give utterance.

"We have ridden far," said the younger stranger, breaking the silence which ensued when they had taken seats, and turning his eye again on Lucy, as though he hoped to elicit a reply to his remark.

He was not disappointed. "May I ask," said she, "what distance you have come?"

"We left Massachusetts a couple of days ago," he replied, "and have been at hard riding ever since."

"You spoke of business, gentlemen," remarked the Governor, rather impatiently; "will you be so good as to proceed with the object of your visit?"

"I address Governor H., sir, I presume?" said the ill-looking stranger, speaking for the first time.

He signified assent.

"Our business is official and private," continued the speaker, in a voice harsh and unpleasant, looking around uneasily at the spectators.

"All affairs with me are conducted in the presence of my family," said the Governor drily.

"It is imperative, sir, that we see you alone," urged the other, in a dictatorial tone.

"Will you look whether there is a good fire in your little sanctum?" said her uncle to Lucy, giving her at the same time a significant glance, and having referred in his remark to a small room adjoining, where Lucy not unfrequently repaired, surrounded by numbers of the village children—with whom she was a general favourite—to dress their dolls, cover their balls, and perform other similar acts. Here, too, she retired for the purpose of reading, writing, and other occasions of privacy. More than all, it was the spot sacred to an hour's conversation with Mr. Elmore, apart from the rest of the family, during his visits.

The little Jessy anticipated Lucy, just as she was rising, and opened the door leading to the room spoken of.

"The fire burns brightly, uncle," said the child.

"Will you walk in here with me, gentlemen?" said the Governor.

The two strangers rose, and Governor H. held the door until they had preceded him into the room. Going in last, he threw another expressive glance at Lucy, and followed them, leaving the door ajar.

Lucy, with the quickness of her character, read in her uncle's look that he wished her to overhear the conversation about to take place between himself and his visiters. Moving her chair, therefore, near the half open door, while her lover was engaged in speaking with her aunt, and playing at the same time with the soft curls of the fair Jessy, who was leaning on his knee, she applied herself to listen.

"Your names first, gentlemen; you have not yet introduced yourselves," said her uncle's voice.

"Mr. Dale," replied the pleasing tones of the young

stranger who had spoken on their first entrance, "and Mr. Brooks."

"Be seated, then, Messrs. Dale and Brooks," observed the Governor, "and have the kindness to proceed in unfolding the nature of your errand."

"I am the bearer of these documents for you," said the harsh voice of him who had been introduced as Mr. Brooks.

Lucy here heard the rattling of paper, as though the Governor were unfolding a letter. He proceeded to read aloud:

"The bearers, James Brooks and Thomas Dale, having been empowered by his Majesty, in the enclosed warrant, to seize the persons of the escaped regicides, Lisle and Heath, you are hereby desired, not only to permit said Brooks and Dale to make thorough search throughout your colony, but likewise to furnish them with every facility for that purpose; it being currently believed that the said regicides are secreted in New Haven.

"ENDICOTT,
"Governor of Massachusetts Colony."

There was now again a rattling, as if occasioned by the unfolding of paper. The Governor continued:

"Whereas, Henry Lisle and William Heath, of the city of London, having been confined under charge of treason and rebellion, have made their escape—and whereas it is believed they have fled to our possessions in America, we do hereby authorize and appoint our true and loyal subjects, James Brooks and Thomas Dale, to make diligent search throughout all the New England colonies for the

said traitors and rebels. Moreover, we do hereby command our subjects, the governors and deputy-governors of said colonies, to aid and abet, by all possible means, their capture and imprisonment: And we do hereby denounce as rebels any who may secrete or harbour said Lisle and Heath, in the accomplishing of this our royal mandate."

Lucy heard her uncle clear his throat after he had ceased reading, and there was a moment's pause.

"It will be impossible," said he at length, "Messrs. Brooks and Dale, for me to act officially in this matter until I have convened the magistrates of the colony."

"I see no necessity for anything of the kind," said Mr. Brooks, in an irritated tone.

"Nevertheless, there exists a very great necessity," answered the Governor, decidedly; "so much so that, as I have said, it will be utterly out of the question for me to proceed independently in relation to the affair."

"How soon, then, can this convocation be summoned?"

"Not certainly before twenty-four hours from this time," replied the Governor, "or perhaps a day later. You are aware that the meeting will have to take place in New Haven, which is twenty miles distant."

"We might easily proceed there at once, and reach the place in time to call a convention, and settle the affair to-night," urged Mr. Brooks, dictatorially.

"I am a slow man, and cannot bring myself to be in a hurry. One night can make no possible difference, and to-morrow I will call a meeting of the magistrates."

Lucy here arose, and approached a door leading to the outer piazza. Her lover's eye followed her graceful figure

with a feeling of pride as she crossed the room. She turned at the door, and seeking his eye ere she closed it, gave him a signal to follow her.

In some surprise, he instantly obeyed.

"Henry," she said, earnestly and in a low voice, as if fearing that some one might chance to be near, "Henry, I have overheard what has passed between my uncle and his visiters. The latter are persons commissioned by King Charles to apprehend the escaped prisoners who have taken refuge in New Haven. They wish to obtain authority for their arrest and re-imprisonment, as well as for making a strict search throughout the colony, and will probably obtain this to-morrow. What do you think can be done in this emergency?"

"I scarce know what to say, dear Lucy," said he, as he took her hand involuntarily, and seemed to be reflecting deeply on her words.

"Could not you," resumed Lucy, "return at once to New Haven, and apprise the exiles of their danger?"

"Excellent! I will set out at once."

"I have thought of a place of security for them likewise," continued Lucy, and she drew nearer and whispered a word in his ear.

"Admirable girl!" exclaimed her lover, delightedly. "Why, Lucy, I believe you are inspired by the Almighty for the exigencies of this moment. But I must depart without delay."

"Yes," said Lucy, "there is not an instant's time to be lost; and I will contrive to detain the officers until you are

too far on your way for them to overtake you, in case they should design proceeding to New Haven to-night."

He pressed her hand affectionately to his lips, and was gone.

Lucy returned into the room she had left just at the moment that her uncle and the strangers re-entered.

"Your visiters, uncle, will probably remain and take some refreshment," said she, as she perceived they were about to depart, and giving him at the same time an arch look to second her invitation. "Tea will be in in a short time, gentlemen," she added, fixing her eyes on the younger stranger with such a coquettish urgency as to make her appeal irresistible.

"Take seats, gentlemen," said the Governor, in a more cordial tone than he had yet assumed.

"I thank you," said Mr. Brooks, "but we will—"

"We will remain," interrupted Mr. Dale, giving a wink to his companion, and turning toward the fire.

Mr. Brooks had no alternative but to follow his example; and the Governor and his wife held him in conversation, while Lucy exerted all her powers of entertainment for the benefit of Mr. Dale. The little Jessy, more wearied than usual in consequence of her late adventure, fell asleep upon the couch, and did not awake until tea was over, and the visiters had departed.

True to his promise, early on the following morning Governor H. set out for New Haven, and convened the magistrates of the colony. After a short consultation, the determination was arrived at, that the exiled regicides not having violated any of the laws by which the community

was governed, were not subject to arrest under their order. But to that part of the mandate authorizing a search to be made, and prohibiting a secretion of the offenders, they paid loyal respect, and the sanctity of every house was resigned and exposed to the inquisition of the officers. Their search, however, was unsuccessful, and they set out the next morning on their return to Massachusetts.

CHAPTER VIII.

"Which sloping hills around enclose,
Where many a beech and brown oak grows,
Beneath whose dark and branching bowers
Its tide a far-famed river pours,
By Nature's beauties taught to please,
Sweet Tusculan of rural ease."

WARTON.

"Have I beheld a vision?"

OLD PLAY.

THE gentle breath of spring-time was now stirring in L. The trees had begun to blossom, the flowers to bud, and the tender grass to spring up beneath the tread. Birds were returning from exile, and fishes were re-peopling the village rivulet. Nature, in short, was assuming her most attractive and becoming dress—that attire which many a worshipper has celebrated in songs such as not the gaudiest birthnight garb of any other queen has ever elicited. After these, it is not we who dare venture to become her laureate on the occasion referred to, when she outshone herself in that gentle season, in the balminess of her breath and the brightness of her sky, as well as in all those other particulars which are dependent upon these. Those who have lived the longest may recall every return of spring within their recollection, and select the fairest of the hoard, but it will still refuse comparison with the spring of which we speak.

The pretty English custom of children celebrating the

first of May by an excursion into the country had been preserved among the colonists. On that day, from every village and town a flock of these happy beings, dressed with uncommon attention, and provided with baskets, might be seen merrily departing on one of these picnic rambles. Every excursion of this kind was not merely an event in the future, but an epoch in the past. The recollection of each successive May-day, treasured up throughout the following year, never became so swallowed up in that which came after it, that it did not preserve in its own associations and incidents a separate place in the memory.

But an occurrence transpired on the May-day of which we are about to speak, for the little villagers of L., calculated to fix it indelibly on their remembrance. The morning rose as serene and clear as if no pleasure excursion had been intended. A large party of children set out from their homes on the day alluded to. This was composed, with very few exceptions and additions, of the same group which had been collected the previous winter about the frozen brook on the day of the accident to the young niece of the governor.

The utmost harmony and good conduct prevailed among the youthful corps, which was generalled by the sage and skilful Lucy Ellet, who, in order to preserve order on all festive occasions, lent the young people her decorous example, and the experience of her superior years. The young procession made a beautiful appearance as it wound along the verdant banks of the village rivulet, and was lost among the neighbouring hills.

The spot selected as the place of rendezvous was an umbrageous woods in a green valley, surrounded by various rocky hills of considerable height, rising in some places one above another with great regularity, the highest apparently touching the horizon, and the progressive ascent seeming like a ladder of approach to the sky. The cavities and crevices of these hills were numerous, serving as excellent retreats for the children in their game of hide-and-seek, as well as for the retirement of separate groups apart from each other. This vicinity had, therefore, for years been the stated resort on May-day occasions; yet not alone for the advantages mentioned, since the shady grove attached to it, well cleared beneath the tread, might of itself have been sufficient cause for its selection. Even in winter it was a sheltered and sequestered spot; but when arrayed in the verdure of spring, the earth bringing forth all her wild flowers, the shrubs spreading their wealth of blossoms around it, and the thick branches interweaving their leaves to intercept the sun, it was a peculiarly appropriate place for the purpose in question. If a gardener would have deplored the opportunities of embellishment which had been here suffered to lie undeveloped, a true lover of scenery would have been glad that the wild and picturesque spot had been left undisturbed by the hands of industry or art. The situation had been first discovered, and its aptitude for the purpose which it served, pointed out by Lucy Ellet, ever interested, since she had emerged from her own childhood, in considering the happiness and pleasure of the little community.

On the day in question it was therefore remarked as somewhat strange that that young lady strove to exert her influence in prevailing on the party to turn another way, expending much eloquence in extolling the superior advantages of a spot of ground situated in an opposite direction. The former prejudice in favour of the other prevailed, and the assemblage repaired thither as usual.

In this glade the forest trees were somewhat wildly separated from each other, and the ground beneath was covered with a carpet of the softest and loveliest green, that, being well shaded from the heat of the sun, was as beautifully tender as such spots are in the milder and more equable climes of the South.

The morning was occupied in crowning and doing honour to the lovely little Jessy Ellet, who had been unanimously chosen, according to a custom prevalent, the queen of the day. At noon dinner was served upon the grass from the contents of the various baskets, and the afternoon passed in the customary sports.

It had been noticed by such of the children as were old enough to be in any-wise observant, that Lucy Ellet, so far from busying herself as usual to devise rambles among the hills and promote diversity of amusement, would have used her persuasions to detain the young people the whole day in the grove. Her amiable disposition, however, prevented her from employing positive authority in restraining their footsteps, and she had been obliged, however regretfully, to behold them wander abroad at their pleasure.

When the members of the scattered assemblage were re-collecting around her, late in the afternoon, previous to their return home, she anxiously scanned their several countenances as they appeared, as if to detect whether any individual had made an unusual or curious discovery. She seemed satisfied, at length, that this was not the case, and evinced extreme satisfaction when, a little before sunset, the party set out on their return to L.

They had not proceeded far, however, ere it was discovered that the young May-queen was missing from the party. In small alarm, they retraced their steps, expecting to find her fallen asleep under the trees where they had dined. But on arriving at the spot she was nowhere to be seen. Her name was next loudly called, yet there was no reply. Apprehension now seized every member of the young party, who dispersed in various directions in search of the lost child.

Frank Stanley, the youth who, it will be remembered, had once been her preserver from a watery grave, evinced especial uneasiness at her singular absence, and was, perhaps—her sister excepted, whose anxiety amounted almost to frenzy—the most active in his endeavours to discover her. Separating himself entirely from the rest, he climbed among the rocky hills, and searched in every nook and cavity, at the same time shouting her name until his voice was drowned in the resounding echoes.

At length he had given up his search in despair, and was in the act of descending, when he heard a soft call from behind him. He turned, and on a higher hill than

any of the young villagers had ever been known to climb, stretched out upon its side in calmness sleeping, lay the fair object of his search! On the rock above her, round which the dew of evening had gathered the thickest, he beheld standing, apparently to keep watch upon the child's slumbers, a full-grown female figure. This form, reflected against the sky, appeared rather the undefined lineaments of a spirit than a mortal, for her person seemed as light and almost as transparent as the thin cloud of mist that surrounded her. The smoky light of the setting sun gave a hazy, dubious, and, as it were, phantom-like appearance to the strange apparition. He had scarcely time, however, to note this, ere she vanished from his view, so suddenly and mysteriously, that he could hardly distinguish whether he had been subjected to a mere illusion of the senses, or whether he had actually seen the aerial figure we have described. Yet he could in no other wise account for the voice he had heard, except by ascribing it to the same vague form, for the child was evidently in too deep a sleep to have uttered any sound. Doubtful what to believe in regard to this phantom-image, and in that perplexed state natural to one not willing to believe that his sight had deceived him, ere he yielded himself up to the joy of recovering Jessy Ellet, whom he loved with the depth and sentiment of more mature age, he hastily climbed to the spot where it had appeared. There was no trace, however, of the vision to be seen. It had melted again into that air from which it had seemed embodied. Immediately descending again, he lifted the slumbering child, whom he

had found at last, and imprinting a kiss upon her face, proceeded to bear her down the hill.

On reaching the valley, he found the rest of the party collected in the grove, after an unsuccessful search, in great anxiety awaiting his return.

CHAPTER IX.

"Night wanes—the vapours round the mountain curled
Melt into morn, and light awakes the world.
Man has another day to swell the past,
And lead him near to little but his last."

BYRON'S LARA.

"The double night of ages, and of her,
Night's daughter, Ignorance, hath wrapt and wraps
All round us; we but feel our way to err!"

CHILDE HAROLD'S PILGRIMAGE.

THE adventure of young Stanley, recorded in the last chapter, made a strong impression on his mind. The more he reflected on what he had beheld, the more he became convinced that it was no mere conjuration of his fancy. Nothing in his feelings at the moment, absorbed as they were with thoughts of the little truant he had been seeking, could have suggested to his imagination the image which arose before him. That it was an embodiment of some kind he became therefore convinced, though he could not believe either that it was human, when he remembered the sudden and mysterious manner of its disappearance.

Frank Stanley was by nature neither timorous nor credulous, and a course of reading, more extensive than usual for boys at his age, had in some degree fortified his mind against the attacks of superstition; but he would have been

an actual prodigy, if, living in New England in the end of the seventeenth century, he had possessed a philosophy which did not exist there until much later. Those, therefore, who will recall to mind the superstitious feelings at that time prevalent among the early settlers, will not be surprised that our youthful hero should have closed his reflections with the conviction that he had beheld a supernatural visitant. That its mission, however, was not an unholy one he might have believed, when he recollected that he had seen it keeping watch over the lost child of his boyish love, and that its voice had been the means of directing him to the spot where she lay. But he had so strongly imbibed the common idea that all supernatural indications were demonstrations of the Evil One, that his cogitations the rather resolved themselves into fears that she who had been so guarded by one of his emissaries, though in the form of the being of light that he had beheld, was marked out as a victim of future destruction.

This idea became agony to the sensitive mind of the boy, whose heart had outstripped, in a great measure, his years, and was fixed with sentiments of strong attachment upon the little girl. He determined, therefore, to keep constant watch upon the child's movements, and should he behold her again in the hands of the tempter, by timely warning to her sister to enlist her in attempts to destroy the power of the enemy by fasting and prayer.

Thoughts of the kind described had disturbed Stanley's mind during the whole night succeeding his adventure, and caused him the first sleepless pillow he had ever known. He rose earlier than usual the next day. Feel-

ing languid from want of his customary rest, he walked out to recover his freshness in the morning air. Even to those who, like Stanley, have spent a sleepless and anxious night, the breeze of the dawn brings strength and quickening both of mind and body. He bent his steps involuntarily toward the place of the previous day's innocent revel.

The day was delightful. There was just enough motion in the air to disturb the little fleecy clouds which were scattered on the horizon, and by floating them occasionally over the sun, to checker the landscape with that variety of light and shade which often gives to a bare and unenclosed scene, a species of charm approaching to the varieties of a cultivated and planted country.

When Stanley had reached the borders of the grove in which the party had dined, he cast his eyes upward on the hills where he had climbed in search of Jessy Ellet. Curiosity suggested to him to ascend again to the spot where he had beheld the strange apparition. Fear for himself knew no place in his brave young soul. He felt that his virtuous and strong heart was even proof against the power of Satan and his agents. He proceeded, therefore, to remount the hills, in hopes that he might again behold the shadowy spirit, and perchance have time to question it of its errand to earth, ere it a second time disappeared. When he arrived beneath the well-remembered rock, he raised his eyes, more however in the expectation of being disappointed in the object of his quest, than with any actual idea of meeting a return of his former vision.

It was consequently with the astonishment of one utterly unprepared, that he beheld, standing upon the rocky eleva-

tion, the same figure of the mist which had filled his waking dreams throughout the night. The sudden sight took from him, for the instant, both speech and motion. It seemed as if his imagination had raised up a phantom presenting to his outward senses the object that engrossed his mind. She seemed clad in white, and her hair of threaded gold, while her complexion looked radiant and pure through the rising beams that reflected upon it. In the morning vapour she appeared even more transparent than in the sunset dew; so much so, that the broken corner of the rock which she had chosen for her pedestal, would have seemed unsafe for any more substantial figure than her own. Yet she rested upon it as securely and lightly as a bird upon the stem of a bush. The sun, which was rising exactly opposite, shed his early rays upon her shadowy form and increased its aerial effect. Internal and indefinable feelings restrained the youth from accosting her, as he had thought to have done. These are easily explained, on the supposition that his mortal frame shrunk at the last moment from an encounter with a being of a different nature.

As the boy gazed, spell-bound, he observed that this being of the vapour was not alone. Ere long, however, he became aware that near her, in the middle of the rock, where the footing was more secure, stood another form. Fixing his bewildered gaze steadily upon this second object, in order to scan it as carefully as he had done the other, he became convinced that it was a familiar figure. For a moment his memory failed him, and he could not place that round and coquettish form, with its garb of rich pink, nor that face, with its sparkling eyes of jet, and its raven

braids. His doubt, however, lasted but for an instant. It was Lucy Ellet whom he beheld. She perceived his proximity before her companion, for, turning to the phantom-form, she pointed to him just as he himself was about to speak. Ere his words were uttered, the misty figure had vanished from her side, and she remained upon the rock alone.

Awe-struck, the youth turned to depart. "Both the sisters, then, thought he, are in league with this spirit-messenger of darkness. Alas! each so fair in their different styles, so idolized in the village, one of whom, too, I have treasured up her childish image in my heart, and mixed it with all my young dreams of the future!" He perceived, moreover, that such an association as he had witnessed with the emissaries of evil, might not only be a soil upon the virtue of Lucy and Jessy Ellet, but a lasting disgrace to their names, should the knowledge of it come to the ears of the pious community. Congratulating himself that he alone was privy to the unhappy circumstance, he was wending his way down the declivity when his meditations were interrupted by the gay voice of Lucy Ellet behind him.

"Out on your vaunted politeness, Master Frank, to trudge down hill in front of a lady, and never turn to offer her your arm."

"Excuse me, Miss Lucy," replied Stanley, stopping and much embarrassed, "methought you would not desire to be troubled with my company."

"I honour your delicacy, Frank," resumed Lucy, taking his arm, as they walked on. "You saw me but now in

circumstances which you rightly judge I intended to be secret, and would not mortify me by forcing me to meet you just at the moment of my detection."

After an instant's pause, she continued. "I will let you into the secret, Frank, for there may one day be need to employ your services; and I am sure I may rely on your judgment and discretion not to divulge what I shall unfold. Your occasional assistance is the only return I demand for my confidence. Yon stranger lady is—"

"Hold, Miss Ellet, I cannot consent to obtain any knowledge of your secret under the condition that I am to become a party in the sinful affair. I will not unite in league with any daughter of the clouds or spirit of darkness."

"Then you deem her whom you saw beside me on the rock one of those visionary beings you mention?" asked Lucy, looking at him steadily, to learn if he were in earnest, and an arch smile curling on her mouth, and sparkling in her eyes, when she perceived that he had spoken seriously.

"What else can I think of one who hath scarce the weight of a feather, is transparent as a cloud, and dissolveth in a moment into air?"

Lucy Ellet here laughed outright. But instantly checking herself and looking grave, she replied, in a mysterious tone, "I have, indeed, a strange associate in yonder lady of the mist. And you positively decline an introduction to her?"

"I did not think thou wouldst thus seek to destroy others as well as thyself, Miss Ellet. Is it through thine

influence that thy sister has been made acquainted with the evil spirit?"

"Oh, thou fearest for her, dost thou?" said Lucy, mischievously seizing the opportunity of turning the conversation. "Thou wouldst have her kept stainless from sin in order that she may be thine when thou art a man, eh, Frank? Nay, you need not blush, though you see I read your heart."

Stanley's thoughts were now completely diverted from the first topic of conversation, and talking on indifferent subjects, Lucy Ellet and himself entered the village.

CHAPTER X.

"The sun was slowly sinking to the west,
Pavilioned with a thousand glorious dyes;
The turtle-doves were winging to the nest,
Along the mountain's soft declivities."

CROLY.

YOUNG Stanley's congratulations that he alone knew of the communication held by Lucy Ellet and her sister with the mysterious creature whom he had seen, were not destined to be of long duration. The lady of the vapour was soon beheld by various other persons of the village at different times—and the *Haunted Rock* became an object of universal dread. The rumour, moreover, speedily grew rife that the object of her visitations was to hold unholy intercourse with the young nieces of the governor of the colony. These, therefore, from having been the idols of all classes in the place, became subjects of curiosity and vague apprehension.

Superstition, when not arrayed in her full horrors, had charms which makes us regret her banishment in a state of society enlightened by reason and education. Her system of imaginary terrors had something exciting to minds fond of feeding upon the marvellous. This is especially true with regard to the lighter forms in which she sometimes appeared when fortune-tellers were introduced as part of the amusements of the age, and their auguries re-

garded as serious and prophetic earnest. But, as we have seen, none of the lighter forms by which imagination works upon her subjects were here indulged as the food of a wild and wayward fancy. Their belief, though not less erroneous, was founded on the records of that page which cannot lie, and which warned them of the existence of one great and mighty spirit of evil, wandering to and fro in the earth, and seeking to decoy the souls of mankind to his abode of darkness. The object of this dread was no other than he who had once stood high in Heaven, and afterward became prince of the powers of Hell.

Recollecting that the wiles of this same adversary practised upon the mother of our race, had become the means of expelling her from the bowers of Paradise, and bringing "death into the world and all our wo," it is not surprising that Lucy and Jessy Ellet were now regarded with suspicion on all hands. The gossips, like the sibyls, after consulting their leaves, arranged and combined their information, which passed through a hundred channels, and in a hundred different varieties in the village of L. The rumours to which their communications gave rise were strange and inconsistent. The result was that the society of the sisters became as much avoided as it had been previously sought after. Closer observation, however, caused the chief blame to rest upon Lucy, who was seen daily, at sunrise and sunset, wending her way to the haunted spot.

It was some weeks after Stanley's first sight of the phantom lady that twilight overtook him on an evening ramble. He had carefully, since the time we have described, avoided bending his steps toward that vicinity in

any of his walks. Accordingly, on this evening, he had turned off at the outskirts of the village, at a place where another road met that leading to the fearful spot. Having been occupied with reflections of a deeper cast than are common to youths, he had remained until the slow departing sunset reminded him to retrace his steps. On approaching the place where the two roads met, he was startled by the sight of a light figure emerging into the main path. The thought of the strange lady of the mist instantly suggested itself to the mind of the youth. A new moon had just risen behind the dim embodiment, and shed her soft rays upon the spot where it stood. The last beams of the setting sun were almost lost beyond the distant hills, and nothing but the soft light of that evening-queen lit the scene.

Stanley advanced to meet the spectral shape—it turned —a pair of dark eyes flashed from beneath a silken hood, and the clear voice of Lucy Ellet sounded in his ears.

"Well met, Master Frank Stanley," it said; "you have avoided me of late, as have all our villagers."

"After what I have been witness to, Miss Lucy," began Stanley—

"Believe me, Frank, the interview you beheld between myself and the Lady of the Rock was pure as the intercourse above."

"I beseech you, Lucy Ellet," exclaimed the youth, earnestly, and not heeding her words, "for your own soul's sake, for your young sister's sake, cease these suspicious visits to yonder mysterious spot!"

"Oblige me, then, in relieving me of my duty toward

that unhappy lady, by assuming the task hitherto performed by myself, and I will go thither no more."

"I would do aught but perjure my own soul, to have thee and thy sister reinstated in the opinion of our little community, to say nothing of saving ye both from future destruction. Yet," continued he, "if I also must hold frequent converse with that visionary form, I dare not—"

"Out on thee, Frank," interrupted the young lady, "I had thought thee a brave youth, afraid of nothing but sin."

"And is it not sin to hold constant speech with a spirit-messenger of Satan?" inquired the boy.

"I will request thee to have no speech of her; I would merely depute you to bear, morning and evening, a little basket, resembling this, (and she drew one from beneath her shawl,) place it on the rock—wait until the unknown lady appears to remove it, and replace it with another—then return to the village. Do this to oblige me, Frank, and save me the necessity I shall otherwise be under of continuing the visits so execrated. More confidence I cannot put in you at present; but will you not have faith that I would not instigate you to the performance of an act that was otherwise than noble?"

"Lucy Ellet," said Stanley, looking on her steadily, "there is that in your manner and your words which shows me that you are actuated by some generous principle in this singular affair. What this mystery may be, time must prove. I will do your errand."

"The Lord reward you," replied Miss Ellet. "The basket, then, shall be placed under the large willow-tree at the

end of your father's orchard, that we may not seem to have any connexion in regard to it. You must always replace on the same spot the one you will receive at the rock; and I will cause it to be removed and replenished in time to have it there again, ready for your next visit. But here we are, within the village," added Lucy, "and had better not be seen together, lest it might excite suspicion. You will find a circuitous path to the rock in yonder direction," she continued, pointing to the left, "and had better use it in your excursions, that you may be the more likely to escape notice." So saying, and without giving the youth time to reply, Lucy parted from Stanley, and soon after turned into her uncle's house.

The boy proceeded on his way with an undefinable sentiment of approval in his bosom. Some instinct had prompted him, notwithstanding all his preconceived notions of horror at the abandonment of the young Ellets to the power of the Lady of the Rock, to accede to Lucy's proposal that he would supply her place in her daily visits to that mysterious being; and so far from feeling any reproaches of conscience in remembering that he had given her his promise to that effect, he rather enjoyed all the elation of spirit experienced by one who generously sacrifices himself to suspicion for a noble cause. Something in Lucy Ellet's manner convinced him that feelings of the same kind had actuated her conduct in this strange affair, and he thought of her now more with admiration than with reproach. "Yet what," said he to himself, startled at the change a half an hour had wrought in his views, "if this

apprehension of myself and Miss Ellet be only a suggestion of the evil tempter to place me in his power?" But no; the idea was dismissed in a moment, as incompatible with his feelings of satisfaction in what he had pledged himself to undertake.

Stanley rose at sunrise on the following morning, for the purpose of commencing the fulfilment of his promise. Seeking the willow-tree in the garden, he found the little basket prepared for him, and assuming the charge of it, set out upon his walk. He speedily turned into the winding path indicated by Lucy Ellet, and pursued his way. The morning beams were just breaking, and their light glanced upon the dewy grass beneath his feet, and caused it to sparkle as though his tread were upon myriads of diamonds. The waking birds were chanting their matin lays, and the insects humming in every brake and dingle. Every thing gave promise of one of those days in the latter end of May when spring seems resolved to triumph over summer, by contrasting her superiority in beauty and freshness with that sultry season so soon to appear, at the same time that she might almost vie with the latter in the genial heat of her noontide sun.

But the balmy morning and the day it presaged were alike lost on our hero, whose mind was filled with reflections concerning his singular mission. He walked on, wrapt in thought, till he approached the foot of the hills. He there paused, despite his conclusions of the previous evening, overpowered with a doubtful feeling regarding his errand. He was about to minister to the shadowy spirit whom he

had twice beheld upon that insecure summit. What fearful spells might she not weave around him by thus doing her will? He ascended a short distance, and turned to look behind him. A scene of more complete solitude, having all its peculiarities heightened by the serenity of the weather, the quiet composure of the atmosphere, and the perfect stillness of the elements, could hardly be imagined. He could descry nothing of the scenes he had left, save the valley beneath him, and the spire of the village church in the distance. Should he return home or proceed? He remembered his promise to Miss Ellet, and again applied himself to continue his ascent. He drew near the ominous spot—climbed a few steps higher—touched the rock, and placed the basket upon its base.

Slowly and gradually appeared the form of the Lady of the Mist. It was not without something like alarm that Stanley beheld this mysterious being standing close beside him. She had been about to speak, but seeing the boy, cast her beautiful azure eyes on him with a look of surprise, exchanged the basket for another, and, with a pensive smile, disappeared from his view.

Had all the spells he had dreaded in his approach to the spot been concentrated in that look and smile, the change in the feelings of young Stanley could not have been more instantaneous. Surprise succeeded to his former superstitious sentiments of awe, for he had discovered that the Lady of the Mist was no vague embodiment as he had deemed, but a gentle shape of human flesh and blood. Where or how she had vanished, however, was still a mys-

tery; but he was so overpowered with a sense of his discovery, that he turned to descend without attempting to make any investigation, and reached the village to encounter a day of great agitation.

CHAPTER XI.

"Through solid curls of smoke, the bursting fires
Climb in tall pyramids above the spires,
Concentring all the winds; whose forces, driven
With equal rage from every point of heaven,
Whirl into conflict, round the scantling pour
The twisting flames, and through the rafters roar."

BARLOW.

"Yes, thou must die—there is but one resource,
The last—the worst—if torture were not worse."

BYRON.

SEVERAL topics of excitement began at this time to prevail in the village of L., in addition to that connected with the haunted rock. One was the projected marriage of Lucy Ellet very shortly to Mr. Elmore, to whom she had been for some time betrothed; another, the reappearance of Messrs. Brooks and Dale in the village, where they took up their abode for a short period; and a third, the threatened incursion of some of the neighbouring Indian tribes.

To guard against this last evil, the inhabitants were obliged to appear at all times armed, and prepared for repelling hostilities. A fast was likewise appointed by the governor of the colony, and public worship held daily, to offer up prayer in view of the impending danger. At such times a guard of men, with muskets ready for immediate use, was stationed without the building to repulse any attack

of the savages, and give the word of warning to those engaged within. In this way, as the situation of the village was in itself strong, owing to the hills that surrounded it, the inhabitants trusted that they were fully prepared to resist any sudden attack.

Things were in this state when, on a certain day, the morning beams had shone on the unpretending spire of L. for five or six hours, and the people had assembled in the building beneath as usual. The lengthy prayer with which the Puritans were wont to commence their exercises had concluded, and just as every voice was attuned to the melody of a pious psalm, a loud and unusual noise was heard.

The worshippers of that humble meeting-house paused to listen, with ears erect and faces filled with boding expectation. It was the terrific yell of the approaching Indians. This was speedily followed by the appointed signal from the soldiery stationed without, and at the instant that the report of the musketry rang in the air, the congregation started from their seats in terror. Each man rushed for his arms, and, crowding to the doors and windows, found the building completely surrounded by savages. The females, remaining in the interior, shrieked in the extremity of their alarm.

The scene that followed is not easily described. A fearful struggle, of course, ensued. Heaven, too, at that moment added its terrors to the scene. A furious thunder-storm arose, and amidst the most vivid flashes of lightning, and awful reverberations, the rain began to descend in torrents.

The villagers now yielded themselves completely to terror, and, abandoning the conflict, prostrated themselves on their knees, and resorted to prayer. The Indians took fresh courage from this circumstance, and commenced firing the meeting-house. For a little time the rain prevented their efforts from taking effect; but at length, as the strong army of a battle will rout the less powerful, so did the fiercer element dispel the weaker.

The fire was finally triumphant, and spouted in jets of flame out at each window of the consuming building, while huge flakes of burning materials went driving on the wind, and rolling a dark canopy of smoke over the neighbourhood. The lurid glow lit up the air, and showed with terrible distinctness the waving crowd that stood around. The rain, however, prevented the progress of devastation further. But the shouts of the Indians resounded far and wide, as they turned to continue their work of destruction by setting fire to the other dwellings in the village.

At this crisis, the villagers, as if animated by a sudden and simultaneous impulse, arose from their knees, and betook themselves again to the defensive. Previously, in their resistance, wild confusion, despair, and frenzied efforts had been blended in such a manner as completely to destroy anything like unity of action. But now, in concert, and disposed according to the best military arrangements, they advanced a second time upon these invaders.

The Indians, in confidence of their approaching triumph, had uttered the whoop of success, which called their warriors from the adjoining vicinity to behold the approaching

scene. In surprise, therefore, notwithstanding this addition to their forces, they found themselves resisted with a power and a skill such as they had never before witnessed. But their previous success had given new spirit to an enemy already sufficiently audacious; and continuing their war-cries with redoubled ferocity, they pursued the attack. The combat raged for about half an hour, when the Indians were utterly defeated, and betook themselves to flight.

At that moment the clouds of heaven suddenly opened, shedding the blessed light of the returning sun upon the village; and it might have been seen that the recent victory had been obtained through the means of a stranger, who had appeared and aroused the people from their panic of fear, assumed the command, arranged and ordered them in the best military manner, and thus enabled them to repel and rout the Indians, and save the village. This person was a man of dignified and majestic bearing, and with an interesting beauty and pallor of countenance.

The parting clouds had scarcely permitted the gleams of renewed sunshine to fall upon the rescued spot, and the inhabitants began to realize their safety, and look around to return thanks to the skilful and unknown commander to whom the rescue was due, ere it was discovered that he had mysteriously vanished. Awe and amazement filled the minds of the spectators, for they were utterly unable to account for the singular arrival and sudden disappearance of this remarkable person. After many unsatisfactory conjectures, the only conclusion they could arrive at was, that the Lord had sent an angel to their deliverance.

It was on the evening of the day on which this attack took place, that Frank Stanley was proceeding on his second errand to the rock. As he walked on, he pondered deeply upon the discovery he had that morning made. The recent scene of excitement in the village had banished the thoughts of it throughout the day from his mind. But now his curiosity recurred to the subject with all the strength with which that feeling fixes upon a mystery but partially solved. The stranger who had so singularly appeared during the conflict with the Indians, and put them to flight, seemed somehow associated in the boy's mind with the Lady of the Rock, and he could no more join with the villagers in believing the one an angel of the Lord, than he could now in supposing the other an evil spirit.

The more perplexed the more he reflected, Stanley one moment resolved at all hazards to penetrate the singular mystery, to overcome on his present errand the internal and undefinable feelings which would restrain him from accosting the lady, and offering her any further assistance in his power, and discovering the place of her retreat. Yet to press himself on her confidence might be impertinence, and as she had in the morning disappeared without noticing his presence, it was evident that she did not mean voluntarily to make him her confidant, and probably she was involved in no difficulties where he might be useful. The next instant, therefore, he resolved to suppress all desire to penetrate the secret, dismiss his disquieting and fruitless conjectures, and, without attempting to invade the manner and place of the sudden disappearance of the fair but

living vision, await the period when time should throw light upon the subject.

He was thus divided in his own determinations when he reached the woods at the foot of the hill where his purposed visit lay. At that moment he became startled from his reflections by the rustling of leaves. Remembering the assault from the Indians in the morning, the youth paused, and leaned forward to listen, holding his breath, and condensing every faculty in the single sense of hearing. Silence, however, seemed restored to the disturbed foliage, and reigned as completely as though it had previously been unbroken. The boy pursued his course, supposing the noise he had heard simply to have been occasioned by a sudden gust of wind. But he had not proceeded many steps when the sound was distinctly perceptible of approaching voices, speaking in the deep tones of the savages. He turned, and ere many minutes elapsed, the forms of three Indians were visible. "Dog of the pale faces!" was their exclamation, as they rushed upon him. The youth was entirely alone, cheered by no friendly eye, emboldened by no encouraging voice, and so sudden had been the event that his mind was wholly unprepared for the emergency. Yet, perceiving at once his danger, and determined to make one bold effort for his life, he burst from them ere they were aware of his purpose, and bounded off with the swiftness and alertness of a deer. There was but one breathless moment; the Indians raised the cry of alarm, and pursued hotly after him. As soon as a favourable instant presented itself, he darted through an opening

and ascended the hill. A bullet grazed his clothes, and several branches from the bushes at his side, but not one harmed him.

Stanley knew too well the nature of the struggle in which he was engaged to lose one of the precious moments. Accordingly, he kept his way up the acclivity, which, though neither very high nor very steep, was yet sufficiently toilsome to one contending for life to render it painfully oppressive. There, however, he was obliged to slacken his speed to recover breath. The violence with which his heart beat showed how great had been his exertions. He must proceed again, however, for the footsteps of his pursuers were near.

He started off a second time, but his strength was exhausted, and ere he had gained the summit of the second hill, he fell prostrate upon the ground. He rose, proceeded again for a few moments at his former swift pace. By degrees this slackened—the Indians were within a few yards of him. He had a loaded pistol in his pocket—but he knew it could only destroy one of his enemies, and there would still remain two to contend with. Generously, therefore, he refrained from using it, and prepared to resign himself into their hands, and yielded himself up a prisoner with a dignity that was remarkable for his years.

Dragging him to a glen which intervened between the two hills, they bound him tightly, and then turned apparently to make some consultations respecting the manner of his fate. The prospect of death is terrible at every period of life; but in the first spring-tide of youth, with all the

capacities of pleasure astir and eager for gratification, to be forcibly snatched from the untasted banquet is peculiarly trying, even when the change comes in the form of a natural death-bed. But to sit, like young Stanley, in horrid uncertainty in regard to the mode in which life was to be extinguished, was a situation to break the boldest spirit; and the unhappy captive could not restrain the tears which flowed from his eyes. We have seen that although he was a brave youth in any danger which could be met by action, yet withal, he was strongly imaginative and apt to be led away by the exaggerations of fancy—exaggerations likely to act more or less upon the soul of any one who is in suspense and passively awaiting an approaching calamity. This agony of mind continued until the feelings of the youth arose almost to a state of frenzy. He started up, and struggled so violently to become freed from his bonds, that it almost seemed that they should have burst by the force of his strength, as did the withes of Samson. But the cords were of too firm a texture, and, after an unavailing struggle, the boy fell back exhausted.

The Indians were evidently now preparing some torture, which would put the sufferer to severe bodily anguish. As Stanley lay and looked on, overcome with his late violent exertions, the scene swam before him. At this instant he became aware of an interruption to the preparations of the savages, and had just time to recognise the mysterious stranger of the morning, to whom the preservation of his native village was due, and behold him fall upon the enemy, when he became insensible.

CHAPTER XII.

"Can no rest find me, no private place secure me
But still my miseries like bloodhounds haunt me?
Unfortunate young man, which way now guides thee,
Guide thee from death? the country's laid around for thee."

WOMEN PLEASED.

"Did I but purpose to embark with thee
On a smooth surface of a summer sea,
And would forsake the skiff and make the shore
When the winds whistle, and the tempests roar?"

PRIOR.

"A hopeless darkness settles o'er my fate—
I've seen the last look of her heavenly eyes;
I've heard the last sound of her blessed voice—
I've seen the fair form my sight depart—
My doom is closed."

COUNT BASIL.

WHEN young Stanley first returned to consciousness, he found himself in a place whose shaded artificial light seemed very grateful to his eyes, aching as they were in sympathy with his throbbing brain: without arousing himself sufficiently to consider the nature of his situation, further than to know that his limbs were free, and that he was lying upon a comfortable bed, he fell into a heavy and unnatural slumber. During this lethargy, which lasted many hours, sudden starts, the perspiration which stood upon his brow, the distortions of his countenance, and the manner in which he flung about his limbs, showed that in his dreams, he was again encountering the terrors from

which he had escaped. This lasted for several hours, but at length fatigue prevailed over nervous excitation, and he relapsed into a soft, untroubled repose.

After some time, he sighed, stirred and awoke. On looking round, he found himself in a place surrounded by walls of stone, with an opening on one side, blockaded by a piece of rock, and leaving a single crevice through which a faint ray of daylight fell. The floor and ceiling of earth showed that it was under ground; yet it contained various articles of rude furniture, and the moss bed on which he lay was soft and pliable under his weight. The brands of a falling fire had been carefully raked together in one corner, and were burning with a feeble and wavering flame, which cast faint, flickering shadows upon the dark walls.

Continuing his inspection more closely, the boy saw the figure of an aged man, seated upon a stone, bending over the pages of a large Bible which lay open upon his knee. His countenance was majestic and dignified. His brow had a care-worn and anxious expression, yet withal an air of calm resignation inexpressibly sublime. His locks were almost completely white, though his dark and intelligent eye still retained much of the fire of early youth, while the hale cheek and undaunted presence indicated patience and content in the greatest suffering that can befall humanity.

Stanley neither spoke nor moved; but remained with his eyes riveted on the attractive countenance before him with a species of holy awe. As he gazed, the old man arose, kneeled, and poured out the aspirations of a pure spirit in

fervent petitions to that Power whose support he evidently needed.

While he was yet praying, a manly form entered at the opening of the cavern. The stranger wore a military cloak. He stood in the shadow until the aged man had ceased and risen, then dropped his cloak and approached the latter, and Stanley knew him for the mysterious deliverer of the village, and the person whom he had seen when he lay bound by the Indians, to fall upon them, and effect, he felt certain, the preservation he had experienced. He was a specimen of manly beauty; and the proud and lofty forehead, the deep-set brow and eyes, the expressive lip, addressed themselves to the interest of the youth.

Overcome with surprise, the boy still remained immovable, and the old man addressed the stranger. "Has she not yet arrived? the sun is high—it must be noonday."

"It is reason enough for her detention," replied the other, in a half-impatient voice, the tones of which were deep and clear, "that I have gone forth to meet her. All objects that I seek elude my pursuit: there is a curse upon my every pathway."

"Give not way to repinings, my son; turn thine eyes upon the blessings that remain to thee, which far exceeds the deserts of the best of men."

"Talk not to me of blessings, my father," replied the other. "If there crawls upon the earth a living being deserving of pity, I am that man. My food no longer nourishes me, my sleep fails to refresh me, my devotions do

not comfort me—all that is necessary and cheering to me has turned to poison. Vegetating on the same spot, fancy, feeling, judgment, and health gradually decaying, like a tree whose bark has been destroyed—I have been a man more sinned against than sinning.

"He who is immured in a living grave like this," he continued, after an instant's pause, "may well wish for one yet more calm and sequestered. Let us go forth, and challenge the death that awaits us. Hunted by blood-hounds, our fate is doomed. Rather, then, let it come at once than hold us longer in this state of misery."

"William," said the old man, "wouldst thou rashly cast away the boon of life that God has given thee? Canst thou be fated to death simply because the word of a vindictive king has gone forth against thee? Nay, my son, let us abide the Lord's time, and endure here unto the end, that we may obtain a crown of rejoicing hereafter. And," he added, while a tear dimmed his eye, "would you leave Alice and your child?

"William," pursued the aged man, "you forbade me but now to tell you of blessings. But, surely, thou art strangely unthankful for thine—even for the incalculable blessing that thou hast in that noble-minded woman. Hath she not accompanied us hither, and cheered and sustained us with her angel presence?"

"My father, drive me not to frenzy," exclaimed the other. "You have struck the chord which another touch would break. It is the sight of her, dearer to me than life itself—immured in this ghostly hiding-place, and day by

day, growing thin and waxing pale, and smiling in the midst of misery, that is more than I can bear. And it is I who have brought this evil upon her. But for me, she might now have been blooming in increasing beauty in some brilliant destiny beyond the seas. Never were the bright prospects of opening life more cruelly dashed. And can she, frail as she is, much longer sustain the effort by which she has met this stroke of fortune? Will not the reaction, when it comes, be too terrible to be borne? Oh, God, the thought of her is agony!" and he covered his face with his hands.

A female form entered. She advanced into the cave, and, throwing off a cloak and hood, Stanley recognised the mysterious Lady of the Rock. For a second she regarded the younger of the two without speaking. "My dearest William," said she, at length, as drawing close to him, she laid her hand in a sympathetic manner on his arm, "why do you yield thus to grief?"

As if her touch and voice were magic, the unhappy exile raised his head to meet her glance. "I grieve for you, my Alice," he replied, after gazing on her anxiously for some moments, and throwing his arm around her passionately, "to see you bereft of all the appliances of comfort, and to behold your noble spirit display its courage in mild submission and generous efforts to support the hearts of others. How cruel doth the decree of Fate seem that you, so pure, so gentle, so lovely, should be visited thus heavily." Unable to endure his own thoughts, he broke abruptly away from her, and paced heavily up and down the cave.

"My dear husband," she said, approaching him, and looking in his face; "do not think of my lot. Believe me, it would have been but too happy if it could have alleviated the bitterness of yours, or soothed one sorrow of my father's heart. Come hither, my parent, I have news of encouragement for you both. There is reason to trust that our troubles will be but short-lived. Our friends have great confidence in the effect of a personal appeal from me to Charles II. Nay, look not thus distressed, my father; it is for your sakes that I leave those who are dearer to me than life itself. I will present myself at the throne of the king, and petition him for your pardon: and Heaven grant that if we meet again on earth, it may be in circumstances of peace and safety."

"Alice, thou shalt not leave us!" exclaimed Heath. "Death were far preferable to life in this gloomy cavern uncheered by your presence. I will go forth and yield myself up to my pursuers, if thou talkest again of thine absence."

"Nay, William, I shall not leave you in this place. The marriage of Lucy Ellet will occur to-night, and Mr. Elmore has kindly offered you both an asylum in his house until my return, or for the remainder of your lives, should it be necessary. The remote and secluded nature of the spot will withdraw you from the intrusions of impertinent curiosity."

At that instant the voices of men were heard without the cavern, and a fearful suspicion dawned suddenly on the minds of all present.

"Oh, God!" exclaimed young Stanley, starting from his couch, "your pursuers are seeking you: keep a profound silence, or your voices will betray you."

"Let them find us," said Heath aloud. "I am weary of eluding them, and am glad my hour is arrived."

"William, dear William, be silent," whispered the lady, bending toward him with a look of unspeakable terror, as a deep flush mantled the cheek that a moment back was so pale.

"Alice, I tell you it is useless—"

"Hush, love, for my sake, for your child's sake," urged the lady in his ear, as her countenance became agonized.

The voices without now grew so audible that words could be distinguished. The old man clasped his hands in resignation, and his half-parted lips murmured, "The Lord's will be done!" Alice threw one arm around the neck of her husband, with a gesture of unutterable love, as though she would shield him, and placed the other hand on his mouth, while she trembled in every limb.

"The entrance of their asylum is well hidden," said one of the voices. "It will be a day's work to discover it."

"Let us spend the day at it then," replied the other speaker, in a gruffer and harsher tone. "We will not give up the search until we find it."

And they seemed approaching the mouth of the cavern. A moment of intense and breathless anxiety to the inmates elapsed. They stood still and silent as the rocks around them, suspending every, even the slightest external motion, and would have ceased to breathe, had nature permitted

such an intermission of her functions. More torturing their suspense than the long, lingering seconds in which a duellist beholds his adversary's pistol wavering over his heart or brain. Their discovery seemed inevitable. In a few minutes, however, those outside passed on, and after a short time their voices grew fainter and fainter, until they were lost in the distance.

"Seize the opportunity of escape ere their return," said Alice, breaking the death-like stillness that had been preserved. "Quick, father! William! the moments fly. Make your way toward the house of Mr. Elmore. I will linger here to baffle the inquiries of your pursuers."

"Come, my son," said the old man, rising with a sudden energy. "The Lord has opened another door of salvation for us. Dost thou hear?"

"Nay, I will not again fly for my wretched life," said Heath. "I will passively await my fate."

"William! William!" exclaimed his wife, in an agony of heartfelt urgency and sweetness, "I pray you, by whatever is dear in our past association together—by all the claims, I will not say of the continued love you but this day professed for me, but by those of an affection on my part which would endure all things for your sake—to use the proper means for your preservation. Depart without delay;" and an expression of unanswerable entreaty beamed in the eye of the suppliant.

"I will do aught that you ask, beloved one, even to the prolonging of my life of wretchedness," rejoined her husband, as he imprinted a kiss on her brow, and drew her with him toward the door of the cave.

"Let me be your guide," said Stanley, advancing and addressing Heath. "It will be some small return for the service you have rendered me."

"I had almost forgotten, in my affliction, to see to you, kind youth. But you have slept long, and appear to be recovered."

"Thanks to you, sir, I am living and well," answered the boy. "But time grows apace. Will you accept my services?"

"Nay, I am acquainted with the whole neighbourhood. You will do me a greater favour to remain with this deserted lady, and see her safe in the hands of friends."

With a countenance of perfect calmness, the heroic wife and daughter endeavoured to hasten the moment of separation.

"Farewell!" she said, casting her arms around the old man, while a smile was on her lips. "Farewell! we may be parted for years, perhaps for ever,"—and she made a violent effort to repress her distress. "Bless me and forgive me, my parent, ere you depart."

"Thou hast, thou hast my blessing, my suffering dove; and for my pardon, how canst thou ask it, who hast never done me an offence since God made me parent to so noble a child? May the Lord be to thee a rock of shelter and a path of deliverance from affliction."

The old man here turned away, and began to descend the hill.

"You must not linger longer, William," said the lady, turning to her husband, who stood with his eyes fixed upon

her face. "Farewell! our fortunes look dark, it is true, but mayhap the same bright morning will yet dawn for us. And if not, we are not still denied the glorious hope that in the darkest moments of separation clings to humanity—the anticipation of reunion in the future."

"Farewell!" said Heath, folding her in a long embrace to his heart, while his cheek trembled, and a tear dimmed his manly eye. "My beloved wife, farewell!—my Alice, my own one, adieu!" And drawing his cap over his brow, and tightening the folds of the cloak he had resumed, he broke away, and followed his aged companion.

The lady watched the fugitives until they were out of sight, and Stanley remained by her side silent, judging it best not to disturb her feelings at the moment with any ill-timed remark.

While they stood, he had time to examine the entrance to the cavern, which had eluded his discovery so completely on his former visits to the rock. Nothing could be more concealed than its entrance. The opening, extremely small, lay in the face of the cliffs, directly behind a large gray rock, or rather upright stone, which served at once to conceal it from strangers, and as a mark to point out its situation to those who employed it as a place of retreat. The space between the stone and cliffs was very narrow, and might easily escape not only ordinary observation, but the minute search of a mind not perseveringly active. The boy did not marvel, when he perceived its secret position, that it had previously been unnoticed by him: for it might have eluded the attention

of those who had stood at its very opening. As he was still engaged in admiring its security, the lady turned and said to him, "Let us return within till I make the necessary preparation for my departure."

"I leave this spot," said she, as they entered, "endeared by many sad associations, never to return to it again."

"You are likely to leave it in a way you do not imagine," said a man, springing in at the opening. He was speedily followed by another, and they both stood within the cave.

"How is this?" said the latter, looking surprised and disappointed—"a woman and a boy."

Alice turned, at first much startled; but when a moment was past, she prepared herself to receive the intruders with the perfect confidence which a woman never fails to feel in the mildness and reason of a man, however rude. Moreover, having nothing to fear for her husband and father, she found little difficulty in retaining her self-possession, supported by her inherent dignity.

One of them, who was distinguished from his companion by much superiority of mien, lifting his hat respectfully, addressed her: "It is unpleasant to question a woman, especially one of your appearance; but, madam, where are your companions?"

"I am unable to inform you," said Alice modestly; "yet I must say that in my present situation I could have wished to be spared the pain of confessing my ignorance."

The harsh features of the elder contracted into their sternest look, and it was evident how much he was dis-

turbed by the cool manner of her reply. Alice gazed at his lowering features for a moment in perfect composure, as if she had nought to fear from his intentions.

"Perhaps you can give us the information we desire?" said he, turning to Stanley.

"Like this lady, I must confess my ignorance of their whereabouts, if you allude to Messrs. Lisle and Heath."

"Pardon us, fair lady of this grotto," replied the younger cavalier, "but we will be obliged to search its inmost recesses."

"True, perhaps they are here, and this coolness may be assumed," said the other: "let us proceed to make a thorough investigation."

"I will vacate the premises for you, gentlemen," said Alice, drawing her arm through Stanley's, and leaving the cave. After which, at a slow pace, they proceeded together toward the village.

CHAPTER XIII.

"Bring flowers, fresh flowers, for the bride to wear!
They were born to blush in her shining hair:
She is leaving the home of her childhood's mirth,
She hath bid farewell to her father's hearth;
Her place is now by another's side;
Bring flowers for the locks of the fair young bride!"

MRS. HEMANS.

A CALM and cloudless evening followed the exciting morning which had been experienced in L. The fairest moon of May shone above the ruined meeting-house, which lay in blackened rubbish upon the ground. Her soft light lit up the white dwellings and shrubbery of the village with a holy beauty, until they stood out in bold relief against the surrounding hills, which, in like manner, stood out in similar relief against a sky sparkling with myriads of stars. The herbage sent up its sweetest fragrance, and the air was balmy and delicious. In short, the earth and sky seemed wedded in harmony, and formed a fitting emblem of the marriage tie about to be celebrated.

The laws regulating wedlock in the colonies were suited to the infant state of society, and threw but few obstacles in the way of the connexion. Agreeably with this banishment of all unnecessary form, it was not usual to celebrate their nuptials in places of public worship.

This was peculiarly fortunate in the case of Lucy Ellet,

whose marriage having been fixed for this evening, would have had to be deferred, had it been the expectation to celebrate it in the village meeting-house. The arrangements, however, had been made for the performance of the ceremony in the house of her uncle, and the unpleasant affair of the morning was not permitted to retard a matter of such vitality. Lucy's nerves, too, being of that firm kind which no shock could shatter or disturb beyond the passing moment, there was no necessity for deferring the period.

The hospitalities of her uncle's house were thrown open to the villagers—not, it is true, by great displays, such as grace nuptial feasts at the present day, but by means of that unpretending welcome and abundance of cheer, which appeals at once to the heart and appetite of the guest. The best parlour was graced with vases of the freshest spring flowers, and tasteful green branches interwoven with white roses—the whole answering to the idea of a fitting place for a marriage scene.

The gate leading to Governor H.'s house was besieged by vehicles of almost every shape and description. The company had assembled about eight o'clock, and were awaiting the entrance of the bridal train, when their attention was diverted by the appearance of Jessy Ellet, the young sister of the bride, holding by the hand of a lady, who, from the fact that she was a stranger, as well as from something striking in her aspect, elicited an unusual degree of notice. Care, more than time, had made inroads upon a face still exquisitely lovely; and the extreme simplicity

of her attire served to adorn the melancholy and touching beauty of her countenance. There was something elevated in the sadness of her expression, as though her hopes lay scarce any longer upon earth, but were removed into a scene where disappointment and sorrow could never come. But withal there was occasionally a lustre in her eye, and a beaming smile upon her lip, that proved her capable of the deepest and strongest earthly attachments.

This was evinced in her manner toward the child, upon whom she frequently bestowed these momentary marks of affection. Retiring to a distant part of the room, it was evident that she sought to escape observation. Curiosity, however, had been excited, and every eye remained fixed upon her. As she seated herself, and the little Jessy clung to her, and looked up into her face, to make some childish sally, a strange resemblance became perceptible between the two. Upon the brow of each there was the same mild and placid expression; the same azure eyes, and the identical peculiar smile, changing the expression of the whole countenance.

The bustle attending the arrival of the guests had subsided, and the minister, with his features settled into a suitable degree of solemnity, stood waiting with becoming dignity the entrance of those upon whom he was to pronounce the nuptial benediction. The door opened, and a group moved slowly forward. Lucy was in front, leaning on the arm which Henry Elmore had given her as much for her support as from motives of courtesy. She appeared attired in a manner suitable to the simplicity as well as the

importance of the ceremony. A dress of simple white concealed by its folds the graceful proportions of her slender form. Under it was a vest cut in the fashion of that period, in such a manner as to give the exact outline of her shape. A few orange blossoms were carelessly entwined in the raven braids of her hair, showing more spotlessly by the contrast.

As they drew near to the expecting clergyman, Lucy's step, which had been slightly unsteady, grew firmer. Although she exhibited the least composure of the two, yet she showed the most intentness on the solemnity before them, and raising her eyes toward the clergyman, she kept them fixed on him throughout the ceremony with sweet and earnest attention.

In a moment, the low solemn tones of the minister were heard. As he delivered the usual opening homily, he paused frequently and long, giving to each injunction a distinct and marked emphasis. After performing the ceremony, when he came to the closing words, "what God hath joined together, let not man put asunder," he lifted his voice as though he were addressing the guests; and when the blessing was pronounced, for a few moments not a sound was heard in the room. The minister advanced first, and congratulated the pair, followed by the guests, who also approached and made their compliments.

The enjoyments of the Puritans were of a very quiet nature. They neither jested, heard music, nor drank healths, and yet they seemed not the less to enjoy themselves. Political leanings had not then contributed their

bitterness to private life; but religion being the chief topic of their thoughts, became also the principal subject of their conversation.

Throughout the evening, therefore, metaphysical and doctrinal subjects were discussed, creeds and sects compared, and their own views fortified by Bible authority among the elder gentlemen; the merits of different preachers balanced by the more advanced ladies; while the young people of both sexes, without entering into the discussion of subjects of that nature, yet tempered their remarks on more ordinary matters by many a scriptural phrase and pious expression.

A tone of cheerfulness, however, prevailed over all, except when an eye occasionally rested on the stranger lady, of whose melancholy look the faintest token of liveliness seemed a mockery. This lady was not introduced to any of the company, but remained throughout the evening in the recess she had first chosen. She kept the hand of the fair child, who seemed fascinated by her presence, and continued riveted to her side. Every kindness and attention was paid her by her hosts. Frequently Governor H. and his wife approached her and conversed; and the bride at one time during the evening remained seated with her more than an hour. Several persons made attempts to satisfy the curiosity her presence and appearance excited, by questioning those whom they had seen speaking with her. But their queries were evaded, and they obtained little or no satisfaction. For several days succeeding she continued to form a subject of much gossip and surmise. Not afterward,

however, being seen in L., her existence was soon forgotten.

A table, groaning with every variety of excellent cheer, and in the greatest abundance, was provided for the company. Fish, flesh, and fowl, cake of all kinds, and sweetmeats in profusion, graced the board. Nothing was wanting that trouble and good housewifery could supply. This repast was partaken of at an early hour, and the company returned to their homes.

CHAPTER XIV.

"I, that please some, try all; both joy and terror
Of good and bad;—that make and unfold error—
Now take upon me in the name of Time
To use my wings. Impute it not a crime
To me or my swift passage that I slide
O'er sixteen years, and leave the ground untried
Of that wide gap."

WINTER'S TALE.

THE course of our narrative obliges us to pass over sixteen years ere we again introduce its characters to our readers. To those of them who may happen to have lived nearly twice that period, the interval will not appear long.

Lucy Ellet had removed on the day following her marriage to the house of Henry Elmore, situated about five miles distant from New Haven. It was a cheerful country residence, fitted up with much neatness. Around it lay a perfect wilderness of flower-gardens, amid which a refined taste had caused to be erected little summer-houses, which afforded points of view over the distant bay of New Haven. Attached to these grounds was a large farm, over which Lucy soon learned to preside with much matronly grace and dignity. The house itself had been originally small; but shortly after the marriage of the owner, it had been enlarged by the addition of a wing at the back part. This was not exactly adjoining the main building, but connected

with it by a corridor. With regard to the purpose for which it had been added, nothing was known in the neighbourhood with any certainty. Many stories had been circulated concerning its object, and a belief had at length become current that it was haunted by spirits. There were those, indeed, who stated that they had beheld through the opening of a curtain at the window, a strangely emaciated face, with sunken eyes of an unnatural lustre, and a look that was not of earth.

The mystery that was attached to this portion of the building, and the tales that were circulated in relation to it—together with the former reports that had attached to Lucy Ellet and her young sister—rendered its inmates avoided and unpopular throughout the neighbourhood. No distress or mortification, however, seemed to be felt at this circumstance by Henry Elmore and his wife, who showed no disposition for the society of their neighbours, and who no more exchanged visits with any other persons than Governor H. and his wife (who still resided in L.), visits which were mutually given and rendered as often as the distance that intervened between their homes allowed.

Jessy Ellet, now grown to womanhood, resided with her sister. She had retained the exceeding beauty, of her childhood, but exhibited what appeared a wildness of character to those who were incapable of understanding the superiority of her nature. She possessed a certain elevated independence, and ardent feelings, forming a character that few could love, and still fewer could understand. With the enthusiastic feelings we have described, the love of natural

objects was to her a passion capable not only of occupying, but at times of agitating her mind. Scenes upon which her sister looked with a sense of tranquil awe or emotion, and the recollection of which became speedily dissipated, continued long to haunt the memory of Jessy, in moments of solitude and the silence of the night. Although she had no selfish pride or vanity, yet there was an air of superiority in her every gesture, which, taken in connexion with the other traits we have mentioned, contributed to gain her the character of the eccentric young lady. There was, however, a life and animation in her gaiety, a fascination in her manners and expression, whether of language or countenance, a touchingness also in her purity of thought, which, in conversation with the very few persons with whom she associated intimately, gave her society a charm.

The parlour of Lucy Elmore's house was a neat and comfortable apartment. All its arrangements bespoke the skill of a refined female genius—which genius was, in fact, her tasteful and fastidious sister. It was Jessy who had, on this dark autumn day, caused the sofa to be wheeled out opposite the fire; she it was who had, a few weeks previous, directed the graceful looping of the dimity and silk curtains in the windows. The inventive mind of the same guardian divinity had likewise anticipated the more modern fashion of the centre or sofa-table, and induced her to keep a piece of furniture of that description constantly replenished with various new specimens of literature and art. The geraniums and other house-plants in the windows owed their flourishing condition to her training hand; and many other

little accessories to the *tout ensemble* of the room, giving it an air of exceeding home elegance and comfort—felt rather than perceived—were the results of her care.

It was the evening. Henry Elmore was in his little study, and his wife had taken a book in her hand, and retired to the mysterious wing of the house where her sister knew she always spent an hour every morning and evening, though for what purpose she had never inquired, perceiving that Lucy desired the object of these visits to be secret.

Jessy was seated alone in the parlour we have described. She had drawn near the table, and, bending over a volume of poetry which lay open before her, one fair hand was engaged in playing with the ringlets of her hair, and the other lay upon the classic page. The fire had given a slight flush to her cheeks, usually perhaps a shade too pale, and, as she sat thus, it would have been difficult to imagine a more beautiful object. Sea and land might have been searched, and they would have produced nothing half so interesting, or half so lovely.

A slight knock at the door interrupted her reading, and a young man of polished manners and handsome exterior presented himself. The new-comer was about five-and-twenty, in a military undress, and bearing in his manner and looks a good deal of the martial profession. Notwithstanding the great change which the lapse from youth to manhood makes in his sex, it would not have been difficult for any who had known him in the former period, to trace in the countenance of the visiter the lineaments of his boyhood. There was the same brow, surmounted by its chest-

nut curls—the latter, it may be, a shade darker and a fold thicker; there was the same hazel eye, with its peculiarly thoughtful expression, and a lip which had preserved the native frankness of its smile. In short, the person entering was—but, reader, we will not anticipate Jessy Ellet in calling him by name.

She seemed slightly startled on recognising him, but rose with a blush and extended her hand. No hue of rising or setting day was ever so lovely in the eyes of the young man, as that blush was in his recollection, nor ever did enthusiastic visionary or poetic dreamer discover so many fanciful forms in the clouds.

He advanced and took her offered hand, with more of tenderness and courtesy in his manner, for he held it a moment ere he resigned it.

Some little time had elapsed, in a few commonplace remarks, when the gentleman drew his chair close to Jessy's side. "Miss Ellet," said he, "I have come this evening emboldened to pour into your ear the story of a long and devoted attachment."

"Mr. Stanley," interrupted the lady, blushing deeply, while the small hand which lay upon the edge of the table might have been seen slightly to tremble, "I cannot allow you to place yourself at the disadvantage of uttering any thing you might regret, when you become better acquainted with what I must have to reply in regard to any declaration of this kind."

"Do not, I beseech you, Miss Ellet, say aught to dash my dearest earthly hopes. I had flattered myself—"

"I know what you would say," rejoined the young lady, again interrupting him. "You mean that you had hoped—" and she hesitated an instant, "that you were not altogether indifferent to me. But what avails it whether or no this be the case, when I have that to reveal to you which may make you instantly withdraw your proffered affection?"

"No revelation that you could make would have the power to effect a change in the feelings of one who has known you so well."

"Nay, wait until you hear what I have to tell. Know, then, I am not what I appear."

"Your language is enigmatical," said her lover, looking at her bewildered; "but if it were possible for any human being to surpass in internal graces the loveliest outside, in that way I can believe that there is truth in your words."

"I thank you for the compliment," said Jessy, smiling in acknowledgment. "But it is not in regard to my personal graces, either external or internal—for I have too much vanity, I assure you, to suppose that there is aught that can be said in disparagement of either—but in regard to my outward position I speak. I pass for the niece of Governor H., and the sister of Lucy Elmore. Now I am confident that I am neither."

"What is it you say?" said her lover, looking at her in astonishment.

"Mr. Stanley," continued she, "do you recollect the melancholy-looking lady who was present at Lucy's wedding?"

"I do," said he, "and can tell you more than you have probably ever known. She was the mysterious Lady of the Rock, and the noble wife of the exiled regicide. I shall never forget her touching beauty, nor the heroic fortitude with which she hastened the flight of her husband and father on the day when their hiding-place in the cave was discovered. But what were you going to say of her?"

"I felt drawn to her by yearnings of a peculiar kind, and a strange sympathy such as *I* have never known before or since for any human being. At parting with me, she dropped no tear on my face, but pressing me to her heart with a lengthened and agonized caress, whispered these words in my ears, '*My daughter, remember your mother!*' Mr. Stanley," she continued, looking at him steadily, "do you see no singular resemblance in me to that strange lady? Methinks I can behold a marvellous likeness."

As she spoke, a curious similarity in the beloved being before him to that unhappy lady, whose image was impressed upon his memory, struck him in the most forcible manner, thrilling him in addition to Jessy's words with the suspicion they suggested.

"She was my mother," continued Miss Ellet. "I know it by an instinct that cannot err. Look, too, how little coincidence of looks, no less than taste, exists between myself and my uncle's family. Lucy, too, although affectionate and kind, resembles me in nothing. I am a mysterious and lonely being."

"There may be truth in what you surmise," replied

Stanley, who had been pondering deeply during her last remarks; "but call not yourself lonely, unless you positively decline the companionship of one who desires no higher pleasure in life than to share it with you."

"You do not shrink from me, then, because I am thus shrouded in mystery."

"Nay," said he, venturing to take her hand, "nothing that could be either surmised or proven in regard to your parentage, could change the feelings or wishes of my heart toward you. Jessy, I sail in a few days for England, to be absent for six months, and would know my fate from you ere I depart?"

There was a pause of a few moments of that expressive kind which such an occasion only witnesses, and Stanley gathered from its stillness that he might deem his suit not rejected.

Some time longer passed, in which the lovers remained alone conversing. Their language was of that kind which none but those who have been in the same situation can properly repeat, and which, therefore, the inexperience of the historian prevents being here repeated.

At length Lucy made her appearance, not like one who had been dealing with spirits, but full of cheerful interest in those earthly beings whom she encountered. Time had passed lightly over her, and she looked as young and blooming as on the night of her marriage. The remainder of the evening passed pleasantly. Stanley mentioned his intended visit to England, and the conversation turned for awhile upon the mother country. The hour for family

prayers arrived. Henry Elmore read a chapter of the Old Testament in a deep, solemn voice, and, all standing up, he prayed fervently.

The house being some miles distant from the town of New Haven, the guest was shown to a room above the parlour.

A cheerful fire burned on the hearth: the bed was curtained and quilted with white, and everything invited comfort and repose. The occupant, however, was too full of his late happy interview to feel inclined to sleep, and he threw himself into a large easy-chair that stood near the fire. He sat there long, in a deep revery. After other reflections more intimately connected with his blissful emotions, his thoughts reverted to the revelation Jessy had made to him of her suspicions in regard to the Lady of the Rock. His own mind had readily received these suspicions until, in reconsidering them, they amounted almost to a certainty. What, then, had become of the lady, and what was the fate of her companion? She had announced in his hearing, in the cavern, her intention of going to England for the purpose of endeavouring to obtain their pardon. But she had never returned, nor had he heard her mentioned since the excitement caused by her appearance at Governor H.'s had subsided. There had been no rumour of the apprehension of the regicides, and it was therefore possible that they still remained hidden. Young Stanley now recalled what he had likewise overheard in the cave, about the exiles having been offered a home with Mr. Elmore. He had been absent prosecuting

his studies, when the mysterious wing was attached to the dwelling, and in that way had missed hearing the reports to which it gave rise, or it is possible he might have surmised differently in regard to it from the ordinary conclusion. At his return, the gossip had pretty much subsided into a steady avoidance of the family, so that none of the rumours had ever reached him. It was hardly possible, then, he thought, as he had seen or heard nothing of the outcasts, that they could be residing with Mr. Elmore. Jessy, too, had never named any such inmates to him; nor, this evening, when he had mentioned them in connexion with the lady for whom she had expressed such interest, had she evinced a knowledge of their being. They had not, therefore, he concluded, repaired to Mr. Elmore's; whither had they gone?

Casting aside his reflections, after a considerable length of time, Stanley rose from his seat and began to prepare for bed. Walking to a window, he beheld a light in what seemed a house or room opposite. It seemed strange to him that there should be any dwelling situated in this manner in regard to the house he was in—since it was in the country. He was about to persuade himself that it was merely the reflection of his own room, when he saw standing facing him the aged man of the cave. Convinced now that his own imagination was at work, and had conjured up the likeness of one of those who had just occupied his thoughts to so great an extent, he turned away, and hastened to court repose.

CHAPTER XV.

——"Wrought gems,
Medallions, rare mosaics, and antiques
From Italy, the niches filled."

"Thine is the power to give,
Thine to deny,
Joy for the hour I live,
Calmness to die."

WILLIS.

As the object of young Stanley's visit to England has no bearing upon the *dénouement* of this tale, we will not follow his footsteps thither. It is probable, however, that we may meet with him on his return, for we, too, although not in company with him, are about to cross the Atlantic, and bear our reader along with us.

It is known that when Alice Heath sailed for England, she had strong hopes, from obtaining an interview with Charles II., that she might succeed by her persuasions, in procuring the pardon of her husband and father. These hopes, however, were by no means so strong as she had given the outcasts reason to believe, for it had been clearly represented to her, how difficult she might find it, owing to his bitterness against the murderers of his father. Yet there were those who advised her to the step, on the ground that her chance of success, although, indeed, thus

slender, was by no means entirely void. And, on this bare possibility, the heroic wife and daughter had torn herself from the exiles, braved the perils of the ocean alone, and again set foot in her native land.

So far, at first, from her obtaining the desired interview with Charles, his minions had seized upon Alice as a hostage for the escaped prisoners, and thrown her into strict confinement. Here she lingered during the sixteen years of which our narrative takes no account. We have said that that length of time may pass, figuratively speaking, to many, as rapidly as the short turning of a leaf in our volume. But to her, who was thus imprisoned, how wearily must it have waned! Separated from those to whom she deemed her presence so necessary—with no means of communicating to them the fatal termination of her projected journey of hope, how interminable must it have appeared. Then it was, for the first time in her distresses, that the noble spirit of Alice Heath sunk. Prevented from acting for those whom she loved, successive days presented to her no object in life, and scarce the faint hope of escape from her imprisonment at any future period.

At length, however, at the time we again recur to her, she had succeeded in gaining the ear of one who stood high in the favour of the king. Through his influence she had been released, and was this day to have an audience with Charles in behalf of her proscribed relatives.

As Alice rode through London, the lofty houses, the stately streets, the walks crowded with busy citizens of

every description, passing and repassing with faces of careful importance or eager bustle, combined to form a picture of wealth, bustle, and splendour to which she had long been a stranger. Whitehall at last received her, and she passed under one of the beautiful gates of tessellated brickwork.

Noonday was long past when Alice entered the palace, and the usual hour of the king's levee—if anything could be termed usual where there was much irregularity—was over. The hall and staircases were filled with lackeys and footmen in the most expensive liveries, and the interior apartments with gentlemen and pages of the household of Charles, elegantly arrayed. Alice was conducted to an ante-chamber. Here, in waiting, were many of those individuals who live upon the wants of the noble, administering to the pleasuresof luxurious indolence, and stimulating the desires of kingly extravagance by devising new modes and fresh motives of expenditure. There was the visionary philosopher, come to solicit base metals in order that he might transmute them into gold. There was the sea-captain, come to implore an expedition to be fitted out, if not exactly to discover new worlds, at least to colonize and settle uncivilized ones. Mechanics and artisans of every trade—the poet—the musician—the dancer—all had collected here under promise of an audience with their monarch, many of them day by day disappointed, but still returned anew.

Alice halted at the door of the apartment, seeing it filled with so many persons, and beckoning a page to her, handed him a passport from the Duke of Buckingham. On glancing his eye over it, he requested her to follow

him. He led her some distance, through various passages, elegantly carpeted, and paused before a small withdrawing-room. Throwing open the door, he desired her to enter. The apartment was hung with the finest tapestry, representing classic scenes, and carpeted so thick that the heaviest tread could scarcely be heard. Stools and cushions were disposed here and there about the floor, and elegant sofas and couches were placed against the walls. Statues of bronze, intended to light the apartment by evening, were placed in various niches. A large glass door opened into a paved court heated by artificial means. In this court a number of spaniels were playing, and numerous birds, of different species, seemed to be domesticated there.

Upon this day, the king held his court in Queen Catharine's apartments. These were thrown open at a given hour to invited persons of something less than the highest rank, though the nobility had likewise the privilege of being present.

It is not unknown that Charles had allowed many of the restrictions by which the court had been surrounded during the previous reign, to be remitted. This circumstance it was that had chiefly gained him the popularity which he possessed, and that, in fact, enabled him to retain the throne. All who could advance the slightest claims to approach his circle, were readily admitted; and every formality was banished from a society, in which mingled some of the most humorous and witty courtiers that ever dangled around a monarch. The dignity of the king's bearing

withal, secured him against impertinent intrusion, and his own admirable wit formed a sure protection against the sallies of others.

On the present day, Charles seemed peculiarly alive to sensations of enjoyment from the scene before him. Arrangements for prosecuting all the frivolous amusements of the day were prepared by the gay monarch. A band of musicians was provided, selected by his own taste, which, in every species of art, was of the nicest and most critical kind. Tables were set for the accommodation of gamesters. From one to the other of these, the King glided, exchanging a jest, or a bet, or a smile, as the occasion suggested it.

While he was thus occupied, the page who had conducted Alice into the withdrawing-room, suddenly entered. He spoke a few words to an attendant upon the court, who immediately approached and informed his majesty that a lady, refusing to announce her name, desired to be admitted into the presence.

"By what right, then, does she claim to enter?" demanded the Queen, hastily.

"She used the name of the Duke of Buckingham," replied the usher.

"Who can she be?" said a nobleman present.

"In the name of adventure, let us admit her," said the King.

The games were neglected; the musicians played without being listened to; conversation ceased; and a strange curiosity pervaded the circle.

"Does your majesty desire the lady to be admitted?" inquired the attendant.

"Certainly; but, no, I will see her in the ante-room." So saying, he left the apartment.

Alice had sat some moments on one of the sofas we have mentioned, when a person entered, whose appearance caused her heart to beat rapidly, as if conscious that he was the individual with whom she sought an interview. He whom she beheld was apparently past thirty years of age. His complexion was dark, and he wore on his head a long, black periwig. His dress was of plain black velvet, and a cloak of the same material hung carelessly over one shoulder. His features were strongly marked, but an air of dignified good-humour presided over his countenance.

Alice, conscious of the deep die which hung upon the issue of this meeting, grew paler than even imprisonment and sorrow had left her, and her heart palpitated with such energy that it seemed as if it must burst its prison-house. She rose as the King approached, and fell upon her knees. As we have said, there was not the faintest shade of vital colour to enliven her countenance, and the deep black garb in which she was clad, as accordant with her feelings and suitable to her distressed condition, increased the effect of this unearthly pallor. She was still beautiful, despite of care and time, and the angel-like expression of purity had deepened upon her features.

Charles, ever alive to the charms of her sex, paused, much struck, at the interesting picture she presented.

Advancing, after he had gazed on her for an instant, he bade her rise and be seated.

It was dangerous for the king to behold beauty in the pomp of all her power, with every look bent upon conquest —more dangerous to see her in the moment of unconscious ease and simplicity, yielding herself to the graceful whim of the instant, and as willing to be pleased as desirous of pleasing. But he was prone to be affected far differently by gazing on beauty in sorrow; for his feelings were as keenly alive at times to impressions of genuine kindness and generous sympathy, as they were to the lighter emotions of the heart.

Her glance was one rather of uncertainty and hesitation, than of bashfulness or timidity, as she still knelt and said, "I behold his majesty, the King of England, I presume?"

"It is Charles Stuart, madam, who requests you again to seat yourself," said the King.

"The posture I employ is the most fitting for one who comes to ask a boon such as I have to solicit. I am the daughter and wife of certain of thy unhappy father's enemies."

The King's countenance instantly changed. "Ah," said he, "her whose release I have recently granted?"

"The same," replied Alice, "and I come now on behalf of my husband and father, to beg you to extend your clemency to them."

"Madam," said Charles, "you have at length obtained your own pardon, and methinks that is already a sufficient act of generosity, when I might have held you still as a hostage for the escaped prisoners."

"If you entertained any hope from that circumstance," rejoined Alice, "that those whom you pursue would ever deliver themselves up for my redemption, believe me, they were idle; for I had taken care to prevent the knowledge of my situation ever coming to their ears. And except for some such a hope, I can hardly think you would desire longer to confine an innocent female."

"Your own release is freely granted," said Charles; "and I grieve, now that I behold you, that it should have been thus long delayed."

"My release is something, it is true," said Alice, "since it will permit my return to those unhappy beings for whom I plead. But will you not add to this act of generosity one still more noble, and let me bear to them the news of their pardon."

"It grieves me to refuse you," answered Charles. "But your father was one of the most implacable judges in that parricidal court that condemned Charles I. to death."

At these words Alice leaned back against the walls of the apartment for support, her countenance becoming not paler than before, for that was impossible, but convulsed with the effort to repress her emotion.

"Hear me," said she at length, after a violent struggle, "I have one plea to urge in behalf of my request, and if it fails of success, I will depart in despair."

"Say on, madam," answered the king; "your plea must, indeed, be powerful, since you are about to advance it with so much fervour and confidence."

"It is in the confidence of small desert, my lord. But

I will proceed at once to offer it. This is not," she continued, "the first time that I have come to beg the boon of a human life within these walls—a life not endeared to me by personal ties as are those for whom I now implore your forgiveness. Unprompted by any motives of self-interest, but urged merely by feelings of compassion, such as I would fain excite this moment in your bosom, I came hither to beg the life of your father, my liege, the late unhappy king."

Charles looked much astonished.

"I came hither, my lord," pursued Alice, "on the night preceding that unfortunate day which I will not pain you by naming, to solicit the influence of the only man in England who could have interposed to save the life of the late Charles Stuart. My efforts, alas! I need not say, were but too unavailing. But, by those efforts, all fruitless though they were, I urge your pardon of the offenders for whose dear sakes I am here a suppliant. Let the loyalty of the wife and daughter atone in this instance for the disloyalty of the husband and father; and let this act of noble forgiveness distinguish your reign."

The King's eye had moistened while she spoke, and an exceeding softness came over his mood. It is known that he was peculiarly alive to gentle and generous impressions. "Your appeal," said he, "is—"

"Not fruitless, I trust," interrupted Alice, who had beheld with joy the effect of her words upon his countenance.

"Far otherwise," replied Charles; "but ask not your

demand as a boon at my hands, urge it as a debt of gratitude due from a son to one who would have saved the life of his parent."

"Call it what you will, my lord, but grant my request."

"Rise, madam," said Charles; "my debt to you shall be cancelled—your husband and father are pardoned."

Alice pressed the hand with grateful warmth, and raised it to her lips. "May the Lord reward you for the blest and healing words you have uttered," said she. "No thanks my tongue can speak may suitably express my acknowledgments for what you have done. You have yourself, my liege, known what it is to be hunted down by those who would have deprived you of life. And when you first learned that you might again hold your existence without fear, the thrill of happiness you must have experienced may be named as a fair parallel with that you now confer on those two outcasts whose lives and liberty hung upon your word. But there is no criterion by which one of your sex may judge of the blessing bestowed upon a wife in restoring the life and freedom of her husband. May God repay you for the joy you have conferred upon my heart."

"I am already repaid in your gratitude," said the King. "Besides, let me not forget that I am only returning an obligation."

"I little dreamed," rejoined Alice, "when I made an effort on account of the late king, that the time would ever arrive when I should urge it to your majesty as an obligation on your part. It was a simple act of compassion, and

some instinctive feelings of loyalty toward my unhappy sovereign. But I find I did not misjudge his son when I thought to found on it some claims to his mercy and generosity."

"The circumstance affords an illustration of the truth, that deeds of kindness sooner or later meet their reward even in this life."

"May you live then to reap your recompense for that you have but now performed," said Alice, terminating the interview, and turning to depart.

The King accompanied her in person to the outer door of the palace, and a page conducted her to the gate, where a carriage was in waiting.

CHAPTER XVI.

"Adieu, oh fatherland! I see
Your white cliffs on the horizon's rim,
And though to freer skies I flee,
My heart swells, and my eyes are dim!"

WILLIS.

"O'er the glad waters of the dark blue sea,
Our thoughts as boundless, and our souls as free,
Far as the breeze can bear, the billows foam,
Survey our empire and behold our home.
These are our realms, no limits to their sway,
Our flag the sceptre all who meet obey."

BYRON.

A NEAT, tight-built brig was preparing to sail from London. On her deck might have been seen all the confusion usually attendant upon the departure of a vessel from port. Men hurrying to and fro with baggage—sailors hauling the ropes, and climbing the ladders, and fastening the boats to the side—passengers getting on board, and friends accompanying them for the sake of remaining with them to the last moment—and the voices of all resounding in dissonant tones in the air.

Among the passengers, two persons might have been particularly noticed. One was an exceedingly delicate and lovely-looking woman, apparently about the meridian of life. She was clad in black, and as she threw aside her veil to ascend the plank leading to the vessel, she dis-

covered a face of such exquisite beauty, and an expression of such elevated purity, that all who caught a passing glimpse of her lineaments, turned to observe them more closely. She was alone, and borrowed the arm of a sailor to walk the plank, ascending it with a firm and dignified tread. As soon as she touched the vessel's deck, she put a small piece of money into the hand of her companion, drew her veil again tightly over her face, and immediately sought the cabin.

The other was a young man of handsome exterior, who boarded the brig just after the lady we have described had disappeared below. Walking toward the stern of the vessel he leaned over the side. He remained thus for some time, apparently absorbed in a pleasing revery, and heedless of the bustle and confusion by which he was surrounded. At length he drew from his pocket a letter, evidently written in a delicate female hand, and read it with much interest—seemingly pondering upon every line of it with that lengthened perusal which a man bestows only upon the epistolary communications of the woman of his love.

Finally the preparations were ended. A bell rang, and those persons who intended to remain in England left the vessel. Slowly she got under way, and the breeze soon bore her out of sight of the harbour.

A voyage at sea is monotonous in the extreme; the only incident that can occur to give it positive variety being either a wreck or a capture—that variety is a thing to be dreaded, not desired. The smallest change in the weather—the sight of a bird or a fish—the meeting of another

vessel—form the highest objects of interest, and epochs from which to date the flight of time.

In this manner six weeks passed away. The brig being bound for New Haven, had arrived within a hundred knots of Block Island on a certain afternoon, when the attention of the captain was attracted by the sight of a sail.

Immediately men were sent aloft to spy the approaching stranger.

"It is plainly visible," said the Captain, after a long and anxious search with a glass, to the young passenger we have described, who was standing by his side.

The person addressed raised his own glass and swept the water in the direction named. After one or two unsuccessful trials, his eye caught the object.

"What do you make of it?" he asked.

"Unless I am greatly deceived, sir, there is a full-rigged vessel under sail approaching us."

The young man was silent for a few moments. He cast a cautious glance over the crew, who were anxiously regarding the approaching vessel, that was gradually becoming more and more distinct, and at length could be seen with the naked eye. She was a sloop, her tall and symmetrical spars rising against the sky in beautiful tapering lines, her sails set, and making rapidly toward them from the southward, the wind being fair from that quarter.

"A fine vessel," said the passenger, addressing the Captain. "I should take her to be Spanish built."

"It is quite an unusual thing to see a Spanish vessel in

these parts," replied the Captain, lifting his glass again. "She shows no colours," added he, as he looked through it; "I cannot make out of what country she is."

At that instant, without hoisting colours or hailing, two shots were discharged from the sloop, one of which glanced across the bows of the brig, and ran dipping into the water, while the other went through her sail.

The Captain replied by hailing the sloop through a speaking-trumpet, and demanding what she was, and wherefore she was guilty of this unprovoked hostility.

The only answer he received was the command, in a stern voice, "Down with your sails, and we will presently show you who we are."

It was evident now that the brig was assailed by pirates, and the Captain knowing that the command to lay to would be immediately followed by a broadside if he refused, and, being totally unarmed, perceived that there remained no choice to him between flight and instant surrender. The one, he knew, would be impossible, from the rapid advances which the sloop had already made upon them, though the other was still less consonant with his inclinations.

The order was therefore given to clear the deck for the reception of the pirates. The mandate was received by the crew in sullen silence, and a few of the younger and more fiery of the sailors were seen to shake their heads, as if they disapproved of a step, however necessary, that seemed thus cowardly. Whatever might have been the private feelings of the Captain, when the character and force of his enemy were clearly established, he betrayed

no signs of indecision from the time when his resolution appeared to be taken. He issued the further requisite commands from the spot where he first stood, in perfect calmness, and with that distinctness and readiness so important to one in his position.

A boat was at once lowered by the sloop and filled with armed hands, which rowed to take possession of their easy prize.

The eye of the passenger never quitted the vessel as it approached. The main-deck presented a picture of mingled unquietness and repose. Many of the seamen were seen seated on their guns, with their cheeks pressing the rude metal which served them for a pillow. Others lay along the deck with their heads resting on the hatches. A first glance might have induced the belief that all were buried in the most profound slumber. But the quick jerking of a line, the sudden shifting of a position, required only to be noticed to prove that the living silence that reigned throughout was not born either of apathy or repose.

"Perhaps you might pacify them by fair words," said the young man, as he still stood by the Captain's side.

"There is no hope of that."

"Is there not a lady below?"

"There is," answered the Captain. "I had forgotten her until this moment."

"I will see to her," replied the other, and turning away, he quickly disappeared below. He had known that there was a female on board, but, as she had throughout the passage kept the cabin and taken all her meals in private, he had not yet seen her.

When he entered, she was seated at a table in the centre of the cabin. An elbow rested on it, and one fair hand supported a brow that was thoughtful even beyond the usual character of its expression.

He felt the blood rush to his heart, for he fancied the beautiful and pensive countenance before him was familiar. He stood uncertain, when the hand was removed from her face, and, raising her head, she perceived that she was no longer alone. Their eyes met, and each started with a mutual glance of recognition. In her he beheld the wife and daughter of the regicides; and she, in turn, had little difficulty in tracing in his features, now matured to manhood, those of the youth who had borne the basket of provisions to and fro, and who had spent a night in the cave. In a word, Alice Heath and Frank Stanley had met.

If Stanley had before felt for the lady's situation on board of a captured vessel, merely from the compassionate feelings due to her sex, with how much more sympathy did he regard her now. After his interview with Jessy Ellet, on the night before his departure for England, with suspicions aroused in his mind that she whom he beheld might be the mother of that object of his affections, how painful, too, to him must have been the thought that the worst fears her mind might have suggested would probably be realized.

"I fear I can do little to quiet your apprehensions, madam. I have before had occasion to witness your strength of mind and courage, and, all things considered, I deem it best to prepare you for the worst. The ship is

attacked by pirates, and being unprepared for defence, has been obliged to surrender. I will remain with you, and protect you as far as I am able."

Alice received the awful information with calmness.

Meanwhile, Stanley had scarcely left the deck ere the boat drew alongside, and a number of men jumped on board. One of them, of about thirty years of age, who was evidently the commander, approached the Captain, and claimed the brig.

This person was a man of a tall and bulky form, and attired in a dress which seemed to have been studied with much care, although the style of it exhibited more extravagance than taste. Several pistols were fastened by a leathern belt around his waist.

"By what warrant do you stop me thus on the high seas?" asked the Captain of the brig.

"You shall have the perusal of any of my warrants that you may desire," replied the other, pointing to the pistols at his belt.

"You mean that you intend to capture us," said the captain. "Be it so, then; but use civility toward the lady passenger in the cabin."

"Civility to the lady passenger!" echoed the pirate commander; "nay, we will use more than mere civility to her; for when are we otherwise than civil to the women, and, if they be fair, kind to boot. Where is this Dulcinea? We will see her, for she may be the flower of our prize."

So saying, he turned on his heel and descended to the cabin. The Captain of the captured brig followed, hoping

that his presence might in some measure serve to protect the lady.

"A beautiful woman!" exclaimed the pirate, as he entered. "None of your youthful lasses, but a ripened specimen of the sex; and with a look of sorrow, too, enough to soften the heart of a stone. Come," added he, "most fair and lovely queen of affliction, let me sympathize with you."

The lady drew her veil closely over her face, and with much offended dignity endeavoured to extricate herself from his grasp.

"Let go of her, sir!" exclaimed Stanley, in a tone of anger.

"Why should I let her go; and by what right do you interfere in her behalf?" replied the pirate, turning roughly upon the speaker.

"Because I command you, sir, and because I will protect her with my life."

"*You* command me, indeed!" sneered the pirate. "You shall then see what weight your commands have with me. Come," he continued, addressing the lady, "cast aside this muffling: you have a face, from the glimpse I caught just now, that can bear to be uncovered with the best."

Suiting the action to the word, the ruffian had torn off Alice's veil, when Stanley interposed, and struck him a blow which sent him reeling to the farthest end of the cabin. He fell heavily against the brass railing of the stairway, and lay completely stunned. It was evident

that his head had come in contact with the metal in his fall, for the blood streamed from it copiously. The noise brought the other pirates into the cabin. Seeing their commander in the plight we have described, they raised him and placed him on a berth.

Demanding next an explanation from Stanley and the Captain of the brig, they seized upon them both and bore them on deck, where they were placed under a guard, and threatened, if they were guilty of another aggression, with instant death. With regard to the lady, considering her as the lawful booty of their commander, they contented themselves with uttering jests at her expense.

Whilst the incidents above related were occurring, the brig had been got under way again, by her captors, and was moving on in the wake of the sloop, which had changed its course, and was putting towards land in a northeasterly direction.

CHAPTER XVII.

"Fear was within the tossing bark
When stormy winds grew loud,
And waves came rolling high and dark,
And the tall mast was bowed.

"The breaking waves dashed high
On a stern and rock-bound coast,
And the woods, against a stormy sky,
Their giant branches tost."

MRS. HEMANS.

ABOUT twenty-four hours after the capture of the brig, related in the last chapter, every evidence of a violent storm was abroad. The wind began to sigh, as if bewailing in anticipation the evils which its increased fury might perpetrate. Gradually becoming more violent, it raged with the violence of a young lion over its prey. A blackness, almost as thick as night, covered the face of the sky, as though the Almighty were bending his most awful frown upon a devoted world. These indications were speedily followed by heavy rain, intermixed with hail, disturbing the ocean, swelling brooks and lakes into vast sheets of foam, borne by the might of the wind far from their original source, and inundating the land in a fearful manner.

Two weeks previous to this storm an aged colonist from

New Haven, had arrived with his son at the island on which Newport now stands. The advantages of that situation for sea-bathing, at this day so thoroughly known and tested, had even at that early period been discovered, and the season being spring, their object was to make arrangements for putting up a rude bathing-house for the accommodation of invalids.

During the storm described, the pair had remained for shelter on board their schooner, which, anchored as she was, had hard work to live through the anger of the elements. At length, however, after four or five hours, their rage began to abate: the wind gradually blew less and less wildly, the clouds commenced to disperse, and the shower to fall more quietly. Finally, the sun broke through his shroud of darkness, a pleasant calm succeeded, and the only rain-drops perceptible were those which clung to the dripping masts and sides of the schooner, and the rocks and shrubbery on the island.

As the old man and his son looked around them, the sea swelled and heaved with the agitation of the recent storm, the effects of which upon the waves had been too violent to subside for many hours. The tide poured along a surf deafening to hear, and bewildering to behold; the sea came on toward the beach in swells, rather than waves, as though the whole flood were pouring on in one huge body, rising gradually as it neared, towering above the high ridge, drawing back for an instant, and standing as a wall of water, it poured down like some mighty cataract.

All at once, the young man started and exclaimed,

"God in Heaven! father, there is a vessel drifting upon the opposite strand."

The old man perceived an object among the tide. He took his spyglass and looked through it. "She is dismasted," he said; "nothing but her hulk is left upon the water."

"And drifting against the breakers," cried his son, in horror, "without the slightest means of weathering the point!"

"She makes no attempt," replied the other, "she must be deserted by her crew."

"No open boat could have existed through such a storm as is just past, all must have perished."

"Most probably," answered the old man, with the mild composure of his years.

The hulk was now in the midst of the current, and drifting rapidly toward the strand. Their sight of it, however, was still indistinct, though from the black speck it had at first appeared, it grew a visible object. At length, they could perceive that it was a freight or passenger vessel, unfitted for defence, for there were no port-holes discernible. She had evidently been dismasted in the storm, and lay water-logged upon the waves, at the mercy of their violence. The crew, finding themselves unable to guide her, or relieve the leak, had taken to their boats and left the ship to her fate.

There was nothing then to fear for human life in the end to which she was fast approaching; yet the old man and his son could scarcely behold her without a feeling of

apprehension, about to fall a prey to the waves. As she advanced, every fathom's stride she grew larger and larger. At length, as she surmounted the summit of one mountainous billow, her whole bulk was discernible. And when that wave retired, she had ceased her existence, and the receding ocean carried back merely her shattered remains, in the form of planks and beams, to return again by the next wave, and again be precipitated to a distance.

At this instant he perceived a plank floating toward the land, to which were fastened two human beings.

"It has grounded in a place so shallow as almost to be dry; those persons live and may yet be saved!" was the exclamation of the youth, as he jumped from the deck of the schooner, and began to make his way at an incredibly rapid pace toward the wreck.

"My son, return; your attempt is rashness, nay, it is death."

But the young man was out of hearing. In ten minutes he stood upon the cliff which overlooked the spot he sought. He began to descend. His progress was several times impeded by the falling of huge stones to which he was about to entrust his weight. Large fragments, too, came rolling after him, as if to send him headlong to the bottom. But a courageous heart and a firm tread bore him safely to the foot of the precipice.

He was now upon the shallow portion of a small shelf, which projected out a little distance into the sea, composed of gravel and stones. Upon this a few pieces of the wreck had grounded. He eagerly sought among these the objects

that had brought him on his perilous errand. He soon discovered them. They were in a most precarious position. One of them, a delicate female, her wet clothing hanging in heavy folds upon her form, and herself tied by a handkerchief round her waist to a plank, being placed with her face uppermost. The other was that of a man, lying by her side in a reversed position, with his left arm thrown over his companion, as if to keep her more securely in her place, and his right clinging around the plank, with the tight, convulsive grasp with which he had taken hold upon it. In both these persons sense and the power of motion were gone. The plank on which they lay, not being thoroughly grounded upon the beach, but floating still in part upon the sea, was liable every moment to be washed away, to return no more.

Just as the youth, who had come in the hope of being their preserver, had discovered them, he saw a billow approaching, and hastened to interpose his efforts before it reached them, lest, in receding, it might bear away the sufferers.

He rushed into the surf, and held the plank on which they were with the tenacity of some animal seizing upon his prey, though under the dictation of a motive entirely different. It was not without a severe struggle on his part, that he as well as his lifeless companions were not swept off by the wave, which proved even stronger in its might than he had anticipated. He succeeded, however, in retaining his position; and, before the return of another, by a violent exertion of strength, he dragged upon the

small strip of dry sand, the plank as well as those attached to it.

He next asked himself, how he should remove the unhappy sufferers to his father's vessel, and obtain the means of recalling their ebbing life and prostrated strength. He looked toward the cliff and shouted for assistance, but he was answered only by the roaring waves. He turned his eyes again on those who were before him. The lady, as she lay with her face uppermost, was a sight more beautiful in the eyes of the rough youth who gazed upon her than he had ever deemed were the angels in Heaven. She was at the middle age of life, but still interesting and lovely in appearance. Her garments were black, and contrasted strangely with the pearl-like whiteness of her skin. The face of her companion being downward, his features were not visible; but chestnut curls clustered over the back of his head, and his whole appearance gave promise of a pleasing physiognomy beneath.

Bending over them, their preserver discovered that they both still breathed, but so feebly, that the respiration of each was scarcely perceptible. Of the lady especially, life seemed to have so slight a hold, that there was much ground to fear that, unless it were at once reinforced, it would shortly become extinct.

At this moment, his father crept cautiously along the beach. Anxious for his son, as well as wishing to assist him in his hazardous enterprise of mercy, if, in fact, he had not lost his life in the perilous path he had taken, the old man had reached him at length by a circuitous and less dangerous descent.

He uttered an exclamation of thanks in beholding him uninjured. Then, after a moment's consultation, the father untied the handkerchief which bound the female to the plank, and lifting the insensible and fragile form in his arms with much care, he set out with rapid steps by the same path he had come.

His son had more difficulty in raising the body of her companion. But by one of those superhuman efforts of strength which great emergencies are known to inspire, he at length succeeded, and with laboured breath followed after his father, as rapidly as the heavy weight of his burden would allow.

It was about twelve minutes after the old man, that the youth reached the schooner. The lady, by this time, under the vigorous exertions of his father, had revived so far as to open her eyes and sigh heavily.

Both the men, therefore deemed it best to devote themselves to the other sufferer. He, too, though not so readily as his companion, owing to his face having lain downward, and his respiration having been thus impeded, at length gave signs of returning life.

Reader, we will not stay to behold their complete restoration to consciousness. We leave you to imagine the circumstance. Doubtless you have anticipated us in the information, that in them you behold Alice Heath and Frank Stanley, both of whom the storm had been the means of delivering unharmed from the hands of the pirates.

CHAPTER XVIII.

"Oh, is it not a noble thing to die
As dies the Christian, with his armour on!—
What is the hero's clarion, though its blast
Ring with the mastery of the world, to this?
What are the searching victories of mind—
The lore of vanished ages?—What are all
The trumpetings of proud humanity,
To the short history of him who made
His sepulchre beside the King of kings!"

WILLIS.

HENRY ELMORE and his wife had suddenly been called to New Haven, in consequence of the receipt of a brief letter. By the same messenger, a letter had also come to Jessy Ellet, from her lover, informing her of his arrival in Connecticut, and giving some account of the capture of the vessel in which he had sailed, and of the shipwreck, with the details of his escape from which the reader is already acquainted. He also hinted at some tidings which would make her heart leap for joy, but added, that as he expected to have the bliss of meeting her before twenty-four hours from the time of his writing, he would defer his intelligence until then.

As Jessy sat alone, after having seen her sister and brother depart for New Haven, counting the hours until their return and her lover's arrival (for she supposed they

would come in company), her thoughts and feelings were of that agitated kind natural to her situation, in expecting to meet so soon the object to whom her affections were plighted, after his absence for months in a distant land.

That part of the letter she had just received which spoke of joyful intelligence awaiting her, increased the pleasurable disturbance of her mind. To what could it refer, if not to the subject upon which she had opened her heart on the night when he had declared his love for her? Some clue, she deemed, he must have obtained to the truth of her surmises, and to the continued existence of that sadly beautiful lady, for whom she had so strangely felt the instinctive yearnings of a daughter's affection. Filled with all that expectancy to which this conviction gave rise, in addition to that which the announced arrival of her lover was calculated to produce, she had drawn her chair into the corridor at the back of the house, to enjoy the spring breeze, and muse at her pleasure.

As she sat thus, she was startled by the sound of a deep groan, issuing from the door opening upon the wing of the house to which the corridor led. Much surprised, and inclined to think that her imagination had deceived her, and that in the occupation of her mind she had mistaken some ordinary sound, and fancied it that manifestation of distress which she deemed she had heard, she aroused herself completely from her reflections, and listened breathlessly to hear whether or not it should be repeated. In a few minutes it was audible again. This time it was impossible

that she could be mistaken; it was a groan of human agony which she had heard. She rose instantly, and approached the door from whence it came. She had never before sought entrance here, having always supposed the place sacred to her sister's devotions, and containing no possible attractions which should lead her to visit it.

Hastily she glanced her eye along the door in quest of a handle or latch to assist her in opening it; but it contained none. She then pushed it, in hopes that it might give way to her pressure. It was firmly secured, however, and resisted all her attempts. At length she was about to desist in despair, when another groan, deeper and more heartrending than those she had heard previously, caused her to make one more effort. She exerted her utmost, strength, and in doing so, her hand accidentally touched upon a secret spring, and the door suddenly gave way. She found herself at the foot of a low flight of steps, up which she quickly ascended.

Jessy Ellet here encountered another door, which stood ajar. She heard within the sound of a heavy tread, and, filled with astonishment, hesitated whether to advance or retreat. Again a moan of distress fell upon her ear. Stimulated by feelings of kindness and compassion, no less than of intense curiosity, she proceeded, and stood within a neat though humble apartment. It was carpeted, and otherwise comfortably furnished. A table, strewn with prints and newspapers, was placed in the centre of the room. A low fire burned on the hearth, notwithstanding the lateness of the season, and a couch was drawn

near it, beside which was placed a stand covered with phials, and a bowl containing nourishment for an invalid.

Upon this couch lay the form of a person covered with a cloak. Jessy's quick glance rested here, and, at that moment, another of the sounds of pain, such as she had heard, issued from beneath the folds of the mantle. Instantly approaching, she turned down the cloak, and beheld the face of the dying person lying beneath it. It was that of an aged man, whose features were wan and worn. His eyes were closed, and through the midst of the traces of pain which rested upon his countenance, might have been discerned the calm beauty of holiness, and the placid smile of one whose hopes were placed in heaven.

As Jessy stood, she became conscious, by a slight movement behind her, that there was still another inmate of the apartment. Turning, she beheld standing near, a form of manly grace and dignity. As she did so the countenance of the person whom she viewed underwent an entire change, and he regarded her with a fixed and painful earnestness, while a flush that overspread his fine features evinced no little emotion.

"Excuse my intrusion," said Jessy, addressing him modestly, and with embarrassment. "I heard a sound of distress, and came hither to learn whence it proceeded."

At the tones of her voice, the invalid, with another groan, stirred, as if about to awake. It seemed as though there had been some magic in her notes to arouse him, for his sleep had been deep, and she had spoken but in a low key.

"I heard the voice of my Alice, did I not?" said he, faintly.

Opening his eyes, he beheld Jessy standing by his side. "The Lord's blessing be upon thee, Alice," he murmured, endeavouring to stretch out his withered and feeble hand toward her. "I knew thou hadst not utterly forsaken us. See, William, she has returned; the Lord is still merciful to us. Mine eyes have beheld her once more, and I have now no other wish than to close them again and die."

Jessy, supposing his words caused by the delirium of illness, gently took the faded hand he tried to offer, and he continued: "Years have passed over thee, my daughter. Thou lookest scarce older or less fair than when thou wert wont to trip about thy father's halls, ere trouble visited us. Time has not dealt so lightly with thy husband and myself. See how thine absence has wasted me until I am dying to-day. Alice, thou must have been happier than we have been during thy separation."

Surprised at these words, Jessy turned toward the other stranger.

"He mistakes me for another," said she.

"Well might I too believe that thou art she," replied the person addressed, regarding her fixedly in an absent manner, and speaking as if to himself. "Maiden," said he, suddenly, shaking off for a moment his waking dream, and advancing a step nearer to her, "by what name do they call thee?"

"I am known as Jessy Ellet, sir," she replied, modestly. "Whom do I so much resemble?"

The person spoken to did not apparently hear the query. His whole senses seemed absorbed in the one sense of sight; and he continued to gaze upon her until, in spite of all his efforts at self-control, he seemed almost completely overcome by some feelings of extraordinary emotion.

Jessy looked in surprise at his working features for a moment, and she felt her nature melt in a flow of generous sympathy toward him, as she tremulously and apprehensively repeated her question.

"Whom dost thou resemble?" he said at length. "Thine own mother, my daughter—my wife, and the child of that dying man. Behold your father and grandfather in the unhappy beings before you. Come, my child, to this long forsaken bosom." And he stretched out his arms to receive her.

There was a moment's doubt on the part of Jessy; but a mysterious instinct convinced her of the truth of the words she had heard, and the next moment her arms were about the neck of the stranger, and her voice was uttering through sobs and tears the endearing name of father.

After a while, gently disengaging herself from his embrace, she knelt down by the side of the aged sufferer, and bathed his feeble hands with her tears. The old man seemed to have no part in the recognition which had taken place; his imagination mistook the gentle creature before him for the lost child of his memory.

He appeared now to be sinking rapidly, and as the father and daughter sat with full hearts in the consciousness of being thus united, and listened to his laboured respirations,

the sound of approaching carriage-wheels slightly shook the house. It ceased, and a vehicle stopped at the door. A few moments more, and a creaking was heard upon the stairs. Presently after a step fell upon the floor of the room, and a female figure softly advanced. The father and daughter started simultaneously, and rushed toward her. In a moment the arms of both were around her, and the heroic Alice Heath was at length restored to her husband and child.

We should attempt in vain to describe the scene that followed. From the state of torpor produced by approaching death, the old man was suddenly awakened to all the pleasure of an actual reunion with her most dear to him on earth. Imagination itself will find difficulty in supplying the effect upon all, when, with hands upraised, and on her bended knees beside his couch of death, Alice thanked God, in all the fervour of true piety, that she had returned in time to shed a ray of comfort upon the departing spirit of her aged father. Neither can any conception paint her feelings of bliss as she arose to be clasped again in the arms of him to whom she had pledged her virgin faith, and was bound by the holiest of earthly ties, or to meet the embrace of the daughter toward whom her soul had yearned so long in absence with all a mother's tenderness. Suffice it to say, that love and affection, the first elements of her nature, and her great sustaining principles throughout all her trials here, found ample exercise in the full fruition of joy.

We will not linger on the scene with minute detail, since no power of language we possess can convey the transcript as it should be. Pass we on then to the conclusion of our story.

CHAPTER XIX.

"To sum the whole—the close of all."
DEAN SWIFT.

THE morning of the next day dawned on few who had pressed their customary couches in the house of Henry Elmore, for the aged sufferer, on the night that intervened, had breathed his last beneath its roof. The body, extended on the bed, exhibited, even in death, that mildness and serenity of expression that had characterized his face during the latter portion of his life.

Sorrow could scarcely grieve that one who had outlived the full term of years allotted to man, and drank so deeply of earth's cup of trial, should, at last, in a moment of unhoped-for joy to cheer his exit from life, have finally departed; and Alice felt, as she kissed his cold brow, ere the coffin-lid had closed upon it for ever, that her deepest feelings of filial affection could not inspire the wish within her to recall his departed spirit. Tears, many and heavy, it is true, were shed over him, but they fell rather for the

sorrows he had passed, than because he was thus summoned, in the fulness of time, to a world where sorrow could never come.

He was followed to the grave not only by his relations, but by Henry Elmore and his wife, whose feelings on the occasion were scarcely less deep than their own. In them the deceased, as well as his unhappy companion, had found true and sympathizing friends; and to their unremitting care and attention it was that they had not both sunk, long ere the return of Alice, into the same grave to which the one had now finally departed. Governor H. and his excellent lady likewise attended the funeral with much sympathy, and returned afterward to the house of their niece, to rejoice with Alice on her return, and congratulate her husband on the pardon of which he had been the bearer.

An interesting scene ensued, in which Jessy wept upon the necks of those generous friends, and returned her thanks to them for having so long sought to shield her from the misfortunes of her family. Between Lucy and herself a still more affecting embrace followed. The former, through the strict secrecy of her uncle and aunt, had never suspected that the tender name of sister by which she had known Jessy, was only assumed. But though she received the intelligence in some sorrow, it was scarcely of a heartfelt kind; for both had a consciousness that it was in the name alone that a change could take place, and that in feeling and affection they would ever remain sisters still.

Stanley, too, was present on this occasion. His meeting

with Jessy at such a season of deep feeling for her had been tender in the extreme; and although he had not as yet had time for many words in private with the object of his affection, she read in his manner and countenance his deep and ardent sympathy.

The rumour of the strange reunion between the parents and child; of the long seclusion of Lisle and Heath in the wing of Henry Elmore's house, thereby explaining all the mystery formerly attached to it, soon spread throughout the colony. But it scarcely excited the astonishment which such a romance in real life would create at the present day, for those were periods of tragical confusion and strange catastrophe, for better or for worse, when the rendings asunder of domestic charities were often without an hour's warning, and where reunions were as dramatic as any exhibited on the stage.

It created little surprise, therefore, when Heath removed to Boston with his gentle and lovely wife, there to reside permanently, or when Jessy Ellet appeared as an inmate of their family.

It was just three months after this removal that Stanley and Jessy were united in marriage. No wedding-party was invited to grace the occasion; but Governor and Mrs. H., and Henry Elmore and his wife were the only guests.

We will now bid the reader adieu, leaving him to imagine that henceforth the fortunes of all of our characters ran in as smooth a tide as is possible in this world. We all know that the stream of actual life flows in an even course with

but few. With most it is—romance aside—as our tale has shown it, a confused succession of alternating sensations, sometimes dark and dull of hue, like the clouds of winter, at others, breaking out into the glowing splendour and bright illusions of a dream.

THE END.